

RELATIONS AMONG SELF-CONCEPT, BODY IMAGE, PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS  
AND ACCURACY OF SELF-PERCEPTION

by

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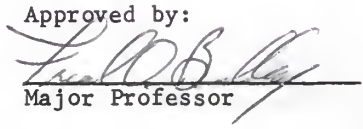
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MICHELLE R. JENKINS

1987

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## Dedication

I want to dedicate my work on this thesis to the memory of my father who taught me the meaning of work, faith, and perseverance.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is the sum total of the view which an individual has of himself or herself (Felker, 1974). It is a unique factor in human experience and a powerful influence on human behavior. Psychologists have pointed to the individual's self-concept as perhaps the single most influential factor in determining behavior (Girdano & Everly, 1979). According to Slater and Cirbrowski (1982), all behavior is directly or indirectly related to how people see themselves and their situations.

The self-concept operates to give individuals some internal consistency through a set of expectations and as interpreter of present and past experiences (Felker, 1974). The self-concept also is related positively to other desirable characteristics. It is well established that a relationship between self-concept and academic achievement exists (Wylie, 1961; Purkey, 1970). According to Felker (1974), a positive relationship also exists between self-concept and self-responsibility. Self-concept, and its consistency, is considered an important factor influencing perception, learning, and a variety of behaviors including level of aspirations, athletic performance, intelligence, and industrial productivity (Cohen, 1968; Combs, Avila, & Purkey, 1973; Silverman, 1964; Wylie, 1968). Even expectations for



job success are highly correlated with body satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-concept (King & Manaster, 1977).

An individual's physical appearance influences self-concept. Body image is part of a larger self-concept (Berscheid, Walster & Bohrnstedt, 1973). Attitudes about the body have been found to be integrally related to self-concept and self-esteem (Rosen & Ross, 1968; Secord & Jourard, 1953; White & Wash, 1965; Zion, 1965; Berscheid, Walster, & Bohrnstedt, 1973). Richardson and Emerson (1970) report that in general, it has been found that if an individual has either a body which is not favorably stereotyped by the society or a body which is erratic in its ability to accomplish tasks, self-concept is likely to be affected negatively.

Recent research has demonstrated a relationship between physique type and self-concept (Lerner, 1972; Lerner & Korn, 1972). These findings suggest that persons holding positive body attitudes should have generally more positive self-concepts than those with negative body attitudes.

The relationship between satisfaction with one's overall physical characteristics (body-cathexis) and satisfaction with self has drawn frequent attention. Beginning with Secord and Jourard (1953), followed by the Rosen and Ross (1968) replication, and several more recent studies (Berscheid, Walster & Bohrnstedt, 1973; Lerner, Karabenick, & Stuart, 1973; Mahoney, 1974), a positive correlation has been reported between body-cathexis and self-esteem.

All that one perceives, thinks, and believes occurs within the context of their body experience. The importance American society attaches to physical appearance and attractiveness is revealed in art, literature, films, advertisements, and other mass media. Attractive people are preferred, not just for their aesthetic and sexual appeal, but also many types of good qualities are attributed to them - a type of "halo effect." The role of physical appearance in person perception has received considerable emphasis in recent research. The first thing one notices when encountering another person is their physical appearance.

Women and men in our society undergo a different socialization process. From early childhood women are taught that their appearance is a crucial aspect of their lives, whereas men are taught that their accomplishments are what counts. Every woman is continually confronted with images of slimness and trimness. Women are brought up to conform to an image of womanhood that places importance on body size and shape (Orbach, 1978). The emphasis on presentation as the central aspect of a woman's existence makes her extremely self-conscious. It demands that she occupy herself with a body-image that others will find pleasing and attractive. She attempts to make herself in the image of womanhood presented by billboards, newspapers, magazines and television. Women become prey to the huge fashion and diet industries that first set up the ideal images and then exhort women to meet them. Women are continually manipulated by images of proper womanhood, which are extremely powerful because they are presented as the only reality (Orbach, 1978). Not only is appearance important for a woman, but the appearance must

come as close as possible to whatever the current media image of women happens to be. Often, that image can only be achieved by a minority of the population. The end result of this impossible quest is that most women are unhappy with their bodies and suffer from negative body image. An interesting phenomenon reported in both the scholarly and popular literature is that the negative body image suffered by women is associated with a poor self-concept. In other words, when a woman is dissatisfied with the way she looks, any other talents, skills, or positive personality traits she may possess may be rendered null and void.

The book Such a Pretty Face (Millman, 1980) describes how more women than men are unhappy with the way they look and have made the diet industry a multimillion dollar affair. According to Millman (1980) 90% of the members of any diet group are women.

Fat is a Feminist Issue (1978) describes the role of women in our society and how this leads to the eating disorders of women. Orbach (1978) is also concerned with the weight of women, but within the context of working toward self-acceptance.

The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness (Chernin, 1981) claims that women have been attempting to fit a male image which defies biology. Chernin (1981) also relates women's body image to the power dynamic between men and women.

The literature provides a basis for review and exploration of the

unrealistic perceptions women have of their bodies and how this unrealistic perception fosters not only negative self-concepts, but negative judgments of other women whose bodies do not match the image currently in fashion. Further, the literature illustrates how body image is conceived of not only as a whole, but in terms of specific parts and functions and how, for women, negative attitudes toward their own bodies are developmental.

Body image disturbance is pervasive in American society, and especially common during the late adolescent, early adult years (Berscheid, Walster, & Bohrnstedt, 1973). The research tends to support body image disturbance in women. Women misperceive their size as being larger, while men are more realistic in their body perceptions. No matter how small women are, they desire to be smaller, while men are realistic about their larger and heavier bodies and actually desire larger, heavier bodies (Calden, Lundy, & Schlafer, 1959; Gray, 1977; Miller, Coffman & Linke, 1980).

It is true that men also have body image problems (Fisher, 1973). However, men are socialized toward achieving success in the world of work. Even if their bodies do not match their internalized ideal, they can still achieve success and happiness. Men are also allowed to age, it often makes them more attractive, whereas the aging process for most women is a frightening experience. (Sontag, 1979).

Therefore, even though some men suffer from body image problems, it is mainly women who operate under the irrational belief that a

person's identity is defined solely by the physical appearance of her body. Other irrational beliefs associated with body image that women have are: If I am overweight I am sloppy, unattractive, unhealthy, dumb, incompetent, out of control, unworthy of love, unworthy of friends, useless, will never achieve success, etc. (Worsley, 1981). Women's nonacceptance of their bodies generalizes to almost every aspect of their lives.

Feelings about one's body are related to one's self-concept (Jourard & Secord, 1955). Due to the fact that the body is often the part of the person that is initially presented to the world in social interactions, the way one pictures one's physical self and, consequently, how one thinks others see them, is reflected in their self-image or self-concept. Therefore, a negative evaluation of one's body can have ramifications in various aspects of the total self-concept.

Social acceptance, popularity, persuasive power, and success are all commonly thought to be influenced by an individual's physical attractiveness. Recent studies have corroborated the notion that physical attractiveness is one of the single most important factors determining social acceptance, particularly among college-age adults (Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971; Berscheid & Walster, 1972; Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). Attractiveness affects interpersonal relationships in that attractive people are assigned more positive characteristics and expectations for a better life. This is more pronounced for women. Women appear to judge themselves and judge other women more harshly than do men (Barocas & Karoly, 1972; Fitts, Adams,



Radford, Richard, Thomas, Thomas & Thompson, 1972; Miller, 1970; Mitchell & Orr, 1976; Worsley, 1981).

Body image has been studied as overall attractiveness or unattractiveness, as well as in terms of specific body parts. Again, research supports more disturbance of body image in women than men, and a greater number of body parts figure into the self-concept of women than for men (Mahoney & Finch, 1976).

From a developmental standpoint, women's body image disturbance may be related to the negative connotations placed on the functions of the body from the time of puberty (Breit & Ferrandino, 1979; Fisher 1973; Lerner & Brackney, 1978). Women's body images develop at an early age in response to their socialized roles and attitudes society holds about women and their bodies (Breit & Ferrandino, 1979; Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Fisher, 1973; Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980).

Body image problems in women appear to stem from their acceptance of society's prescriptions for women. Many of the cognitions that go along with this acceptance are irrational (e.g., I am fat, therefore, I am worthless).

Given that the majority of clients in therapy are women (Chester, 1972), that most women have body image problems, and some have severe body image problems resulting in the often fatal disease of anorexia nervosa, this study has relevance for the counseling of women. Further, the contemporary preoccupation with thinness affects both women and men.

Men are increasingly being affected by similar societal pressures to conform to an ideal image. Therefore, this researcher believes this study also has relevance for the counseling of men.

The present study investigated the relationship between self-concept and body image. The investigator wished to study the relationship between body-cathexis and self-satisfaction. Specifically, this study examined whether or not a person's satisfaction with his or her body image and a person's satisfaction with his or her self-image were positively correlated. Further, this investigation studied how an individual's body image and self-concept correlate with others' view of them, as well as the correlation with that individual's ideal person. Sex differences were investigated. Considering the inordinate emphasis that American society places on being young, looking young, and acting young, this study investigated for age differences. In addition, this study examined individuals' accuracy at assessing their own attractiveness using subjects' self-ratings as predictors and judges' ratings of the subjects' photographs as criteria. Again, investigating for sex differences.

In sum, the present study was designed to extend the findings of previous research on body image and self-concept, to determine the generalizability of the previous results of Rosen and Ross (1968), and to obtain a more differentiated understanding of the relations among body image, importance of physical attractiveness, self-concept, and accuracy of peoples' perceptions of their own attractiveness.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The self-concept is a unique factor in human experience and a powerful influence on human behavior. Psychologists have pointed to the individual's self-concept as perhaps the single most influential factor in determining behavior (Girdano & Everly, 1979). All behavior is directly or indirectly related to how people see themselves and their situations (Slater & Cirbrowski, 1982). Girdano and Everly (1979) define self-concept or self-perception as the image an individual holds of himself or herself. They explain that an individual forms this image by evaluating their power and self-worth, based upon input from their family, friends and others who hold significant places in their life. At a very early age an individual begins to accumulate information about himself or herself from these sources, and slowly they form their self-concept. This formation may stop as early as the age of five or six or may continue until death.

Interest in the self, what it is and how it develops, is not a recent phenomenon. According to Hamachek (1971), Renè Descartes first discussed the "cognito," or self, as a thinking substance in the seventeenth century. The self was subjected to the vigorous philosophical examinations of such thinkers as Leibnitz, Locke, Hume, and Berkeley. As psychology evolved from philosophy as a separate entity, the self, as a related construct, moved along with it. However, as behaviorism



dominated psychological thinking during the first forty years of this century, the self all but disappeared as a theoretical or empirical construct of any stature. Study of the self could not be easily investigated under rigidly controlled laboratory conditions. Therefore, the subject was not considered an appropriate one for scientific pursuit. However, the concept was kept alive during the early part of the twentieth century by individuals such as Cooley (1902), Mead (1934), Dewey (1916), and James (1890). Hamachek (1971) points out that the concept of self has been revived and has exhibited remarkable vitality during the period since World War II.

According to Hamachek (1971), "acquiring a self-concept involves a slow process of differentiation as a person gradually emerges into focus out of his/her total world of awareness and defines progressively more clearly just who and what he/she is." One's concept of himself or herself is a very personal possession. How an individual views himself or herself is determined partly by how they perceive themselves as really being, partially through how they view themselves as ideally wanting to be, and partially through the expectations they perceive that others have for them.

Hamachek (1971) states that social interaction is the primary medium through which individuals come to know themselves. Self-awareness develops as individuals compare and contrast their physical bodies, skills, attitudes, and achievements to those of other people.

According to Felker (1974), self-concept is the sum total of the view which an individual has of himself or herself. Self-concept is a

unique set of perceptions, ideas, and attitudes which an individual has about himself or herself. The uniqueness of the view which individuals have of themselves is comprised of three main factors: perceptions, ideas, and attitudes.

Self-concept is a dynamic circular force in human lives. Every human is vitally influenced by those around him or her. The people who are important to an individual influence what he/she thinks of himself or herself (Felker, 1974). The self-concept also is an active ingredient in an individual's experiences. Felker (1974) points out that experiences mold and shape the self-concept, but the self-concept has an active, dynamic role in shaping experiences.

The self-concept is important because it determines an individual's actions in various situations. Not only is it influenced by what happens, it determines how an individual will behave in a wide range of situations. Felker (1974) states that the role of self-concept is threefold: the self-concept operates as a mechanism for maintaining inner consistency; the self-concept determines how experiences are interpreted; and the self-concept provides a set of expectancies. Each of these three factors is a powerful determiner of behavior.

If individuals have ideas, feelings, or perceptions which are out of harmony or in opposition to one another, a psychologically uncomfortable position ("dissonance") is produced (Festinger, 1957). An important aspect of dissonance is that there is a strong motivation to be comfortable, and, if dissonance makes an individual feel uncomfortable,

he or she is likely to take action that will remove this uncomfortable feeling and allow him or her to feel comfortable again. One of the first writers to connect this type of reasoning with self-concept was Lecky (1951). It was Lecky's argument that an individual is a unified system with the problem of maintaining harmony between himself/herself and his/her environment. In order to maintain this type of harmony, the individual may refuse to see things in the environment; he/she may refuse to accept as valid things which other people tell him/her about himself/herself; or, he/she may strive to change things about himself/herself or others. Human beings have a tendency to act in ways which are consistent with the view they have of themselves. This strong motivating force to bring actions and happenings into harmony with their self-view makes the self-concept powerful and important (Felker, 1974).

Just as there is a strong tendency to act in ways which will show that one's behavior and one's view of himself/herself are consistent, there is a strong tendency to interpret experiences in ways which are consistent with individual views. According to Felker (1974), the self-concept is like an inner filter - every perception that enters the individual must go through the filter. As each perception passes through the filter, it is given meaning, and the meaning given is determined largely by the view the individual has of himself or herself.

According to Girdano and Everly (1979), researchers and clinicians have known for years that if in a given situation a person devalues himself or herself, perceives himself or herself as helpless and certain

of failure, this perception will virtually ensure failure in that situation. This concept has been referred to as the "self-fulfilling prophecy": the likelihood of one's failure at some task will be greatly increased if one imagines oneself as failing even before the task in question has begun. The converse of this relationship is true as well: that is, if one imagines oneself succeeding at one's task, one's probability of success will be greatly enhanced.

The self-concept operates to determine what individuals do in situations, and it operates to determine how individuals interpret what other persons do in situations. The third part of the self-concept's power and influence is that it also determines what individuals expect to happen. This set of expectancies has been identified by some researchers as the central facet of the self-concept (Felker, 1974). According to McCandless (1967), the self-concept is "a set of expectancies, plus evaluations of the areas or behaviors with reference to which these expectancies are held."

Every individual carries with him or her a set of expectancies which operate to determine how he or she is going to act (Felker, 1974). If he/she expects good experiences, he/she acts in ways which bring them about. If he/she expects bad experiences, he/she acts in ways which makes these expectations come true and then says to himself/herself, "See, I was right."

According to Curtis and Miller (1986), a person's expectations affect their likability. Whether an individual is liked or not is a

matter of belief. If an individual believes others will like them, they probably will. If an individual doubts it, they probably will not. And, so an individual may help fulfill the prophecy. Curtis and Miller studied 60 undergraduates at Adelphi University and found when students were led to believe that their partner disliked them, they tended to make less eye contact, revealed less personal information and positioned their chairs farther away. But when students entered the conversation expecting to be liked, they appeared to be much more at ease. Further, the researchers report the other students appeared to behave similarly, taking their lead from those who believed they were liked or disliked. Regardless of their initial expectations, students who felt good about themselves tended to believe that the other students liked them more than did those with lower opinions of themselves.

Self-concept exerts a powerful influence as a determinant of behavior to maintain self-consistency, as a determinant of the meanings individuals give to experiences, and as a determinant of what they expect. Positive self-concept is related to other desirable characteristics, and negative self-concept is related to other undesirable characteristics.

It is well established that a relationship between self-concept and academic achievement exists (Wylie, 1961; Purkey, 1970). It is consistently found that positive self-concept is related to good academic achievement. This positive relationship is found for early elementary pupils (Williams & Cole, 1968), and high school pupils (Shaw & Alves, 1963). The relationship is found in both black and white populations and in groups with learning problems of a serious nature (Chaplin, 1969; Gorlow, Butler, & Guthrie, 1963).



The positive relationship between academic achievement and self-concept appears to be more definite in boys than in girls (Roth & Puri, 1967; Sears, 1970). This finding is consistent with the majority of self-concept research findings in which self-concept relationships in boys appear to be more stable and predictable (Felker, 1974). Felker (1974) states it could indicate that achievement is a more crucial self-concept factor in boys. Further, it could be that girls have other areas in which they can receive positive feedback or that achievement is less a problem for girls.

The relationship between negative self-concept and high anxiety has been well established in populations that are widely different in both age and geographical area (Coopersmith, 1959; Cowen, Zax, Klein, Izzo, & Frost, 1965; Durrett, 1965; Lipsitt, 1958, Mitchell, 1959; Pilisuk, 1963; Rosenburg, 1963; Stanwyck & Felker, 1971; Felker, 1974). It has been argued that this relationship may be based on the fact that some individuals are more open to expressing negative thoughts about themselves. Since an admission of anxiety is a negative aspect and low self-concept requires the admission of negative qualities, individuals who admit anxiety on one test are likely to admit it on the other. This reasoning requires the assumption that people who have high self-concepts are hiding or falsifying negative qualities. Since there is no relationship between a lie scale and self-concept, this reasoning seems a weak explanation (Stanwyck, 1972). The general relationship between high anxiety and low self-concept is confirmed even when the anxiety measure is a more specific measure. Test anxiety is related to self-concept in much the same manner as general anxiety (Lekarczyk & Hill, 1969; Sarason & Koenig, 1965). It has been found that specific

situational anxiety is related to low self-concept (Felker, 1972). Apparently, anxiety is bound up in the mechanisms which maintain a negative or positive self-concept and influence the manner in which an individual will respond to situations, particularly those involving achievement or evaluation (Felker, 1972).

The concept of locus of control was developed primarily from the learning theory of Rotter (1954) and refers to the individual's perception of whether his or her successes and failures are under his/her control or whether some outside force is in control. If the individual believes that his/her successes and failures are under his/her control, he/she is said to have high internal control. If he/she believes that his/her successes and failures are under the control of some outside force, he or she is said to have high external control.

The relationship between self-concept and locus of control is complex. Felker and Thomas (1971) found with a fourth-grade sample that the self-concepts of boys had a negative relationship with internal responsibility for failure; that is, boys with high self-concepts tended to put the responsibility for failure on other persons. The self-concepts of girls, however, had a positive relationship with success; that is, girls with high self-concepts tended to put the responsibility for success on themselves. Felker and Thomas (1971) point out this would suggest that boys maintain a positive self-concept by denying responsibility for failures and that girls maintain a positive self-concept by taking responsibility for success. These findings were confirmed in another study in which it was found that boys with high self-concepts tended to set high goals and that a significant portion

of them then denied responsibility for failure if the goal was not reached (Kay, 1972).

The self-perception or self-concept of helplessness and self-devaluation can lead to increased stress (Girdano & Everly, 1979). Lazarus (1966) theorized that the greater the degree to which persons perceive themselves in control of a situation, the less severe their stress reaction. Geer, Davison, and Gatchel (1970) illustrated that just the expectation of control over one's stressors can be effective in reducing stress.

Not only is self-perception important in the severity of the stress response, self-perception (especially the devalued, helpless, and hopeless image of self) may similarly play a significant role in the eventual onset of disease, the most dramatic of which may be cancer (Girdano & Everly, 1979). As early as 1955, clinical observations by LeShan led him to conclude that one of the major personality correlates of cancer was a severe degree of poor self-expectation coupled with self-dislike. Similar research by Simonton and Simonton (1975) verified LeShan's conclusions. The Simontons observed that a very pessimistic outlook on life characterized many cancer patients. Those with the lowest self-concepts eventually succumbed to the disease, whereas those patients who maintained optimism and the conviction that they could "win" over cancer survived.

Once these researchers began to realize the significance of the cancer patients' self-perception, they designed counseling methods to help improve these self-perceptions and used this counseling as an



adjunct to the more traditional cancer treatment. Reports by Simonton and Simonton (1975) and LeShan (1977) showed progress was made when self-perception enhancement was used as a treatment for cancer.

An individual's physical appearance is another influence on self-concept. In general, it has been found that if an individual has either a body which is not favorably stereotyped by the society or a body which is erratic in its ability to accomplish tasks, self-concept is likely to be affected negatively. It has been found that handicapped children of different races tend to have more negative self-concepts than nonhandicapped children (Richardson & Emerson, 1970). Those children with the most visually obvious handicaps tend to have the most negative self-concepts, and this seems to be particularly devastating for girls (Meissner & Thoreson, 1967). According to Craig (1965), there is also considerable evidence that deaf children usually have more difficulty developing and maintaining a positive self-concept.

Felker (1974) points out the effects of physical handicaps on self-concept could be due partly to the decreased competence and efficiency of the handicapped individual; however, physical appearance, exclusive of competence, apparently influences self-concept. It has been that if an individual has a body appearance that has negative connotations in society, he or she is likely to learn from his or her social interactions that he or she should regard himself or herself with the same negative connotations which society attaches to his or her physical appearance (McCandless, 1967; Staffieri, 1967).

For thousands of years, philosophers and physicians and,

more recently, anthropologists and developmental psychologists have speculated about and researched the relationships between physical factors and personality. Efforts to classify body types date back as early as 400 B.C. when Hippocrates wrote about the "humors" of the body and the effect of these "humors" on personality (Hamachek, 1971).

Almost a half-century ago, Sheldon (1942) suggested that human behavior is partly a function of body build which is established through genetic and physiological factors. Little empirical evidence has emerged affording support for Sheldon's "constitutional" theory. An alternative to the genetic-inheritance concept was proposed by McCandless (1961) and Walker (1962) on the basis of social learning theory. They suggested that a significant source of covariation between somatotype and personality evolves from expectations and feedback given different physiques by others. Several studies have been conducted which tend to support this stereotyped-somatotype concept (Adams, 1977; Lerner, 1969a, Lerner, 1969b; Lerner, 1976; Lerner & Korn, 1972; Staffieri, 1967; Yates & Taylor, 1978).

Brodsky (1954) demonstrated that there are indeed different social reactions to different body builds. He prepared five 15-inch silhouettes of males, representing: (1) endomorph (obese); (2) endomesomorph (muscular, but short and heavy); (3) mesomorph (athletic, muscular); (4) ectomesomorph (muscular, but tall and thin); (5) ectomorph (thin and tall). He also constructed a questionnaire containing such questions as the following: "Which one of this group of five men is most aggressive?" His research population consisted of seventy-five male college students

from Howard University, almost all of whom were black; and fifty white male college students from George Washington University. One of the things which Brodsky discovered was that there were no important differences in the way the two groups responded, which lends weight to the idea of a "cultural stereotype," or characteristic way of regarding body build.

The Brodsky (1954) study suggests that there may be characteristic stereotyped ways of reacting to different types of male physique, and that the trend of this reaction is such as to favor the mesomorph. Other studies support these findings (Corte's & Gatti, 1965; Walker, 1962; Staffieri, 1957). In general researchers have determined that endomorphic and ectomorphic body builds tend to be associated with socially negative behavioral descriptions, while mesomorphic builds tend to be viewed more positively by others.

One's physical appearance has a powerful potential for eliciting specific social responses. These can be positive or negative. How a person feels about himself or herself depends, to some degree, on how he or she feels about the physical part of himself or herself. How he or she feels about that depends, in large measure, on how others around him or her make him/her feel.

Although empirical verification of the existence of body build-behavior stereotypes is plentiful, anthropometric indices of physique calculated for somatotyping purposes tend to have little psychological predictive utility (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1968; Caron & Witzel, 1975;

Domey, Duckworth & Morandi, 1964; Hendry & Gillies, 1978, Hood, 1968; Lerner, Karabenick, & Stuart, 1973; Slaughter 1970). Although different physiques tend to be stereotyped with particular personality profiles (i.e., endomorphs are lazy, ectomorphs are nervous, mesomorphs are leaders), objective measures of body build denote that personality does not differ significantly among groups differentiated on the basis of somatotype.

According to Tucker (1983), the failure to detect significant and meaningful relationships among somatotype and personality may evolve from the lack of subjective-perceptual components within the anthropometric somatotyping process. Human perception of physique may differ from that which results from anthropometric evaluation. As Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973) argue, "it may be irrelevant if someone is 'anthropometrically' of average build, if, in fact, he/she appears to be fat to others and to himself/herself." They indicate that indices of somatotype that rely on visual inspection may be more useful in establishing relations between physique and personality.

Tucker (1983) reports "the general assertion that somatotype provides little psychological predictive utility needs amendment" in light of his findings. Significant differences in external and internal self-concept were revealed among groups of males differentiated according to self-perceived body build accounting for as much as 25.8% of the variance in self-concept. Further, self-perceived mesomorphs reported feelings of confidence, acceptance, satisfaction, and self-worth that tended to be significantly more positive than did more ectomorphic or endomorphic individuals.

William James (1961) was among the first psychologists to write specifically about the "physical self" as a way to underscore the fact that a person's physical features have an important place in his/her concept of self. Like all other aspects of the self-concept, the image a person has of his/her body is subjective. A person may have a generally positive body image - he/she likes the way he/she looks, or he/she may have a negative body image - the way he/she looks falls short of his/her expectations for himself/herself.

According to Hamachek (1971) there is a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that an individual's appearance is an important determiner of self-esteem, both among men and women. In general, persons who are satisfied with their bodies and accept them are more likely to manifest higher self-esteem than persons who dislike their bodies.

Hamachek (1971) proposes one possible explanation for the relationship between self-acceptance and body-acceptance may be the fact that the ideal self includes attitudes related to the appearance of the body, the "body ideal." According to Hamachek (1971), each individual has a more or less clear idea of how he or she would like to look. If his or her actual body proportions come close to conforming to the dimensions and appearance of his or her ideal body image, he or she is more likely to think better of both his or her physical and nonphysical self. If, on the other hand, his or her body deviates too far from his or her ideal body image, then he or she is more likely to have lower self-esteem.

Exploration of the body begins in infancy. The perceptions about the body which grow out of this exploration provide a framework for a

person's organization of relationships (Rindskopf & Gratch, 1983). Men and women develop different kinds of relationships perhaps as a result of the different body socialization processes that they experience. In an article which discusses women and exercise, Rindskopf and Gratch (1983) explain that for men the body means freedom, energy, and strength; whereas, for women the body is quiescent, protected, and limited in movement. "Further, there appears an early and subtle emphasis on appearance in females, with value placed on prettiness and neatness" (Rindskopf & Gratch, 1983, p.17). If females do not believe that their bodies approach the "prettiness" valued by society, they probably will feel dissatisfaction.

Usually, a person's ideal body image conforms more or less to the prevailing cultural standards of what a pleasant appearance is and what it is not (Hamachek, 1971). Margaret Mead (1949), in her studies of various cultures, has observed that each society has its own idiosyncratic attitudes and standards of personal beauty.

Throughout history, concepts of feminine beauty have varied to reflect the aesthetic standards of the particular period. According to Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, and Thompson (1980), from the Rubenesque women of the 17th. century to contemporary symbols of fashion, different body shapes have been selected for, and associated with, desirable social status. Ford and Beach (1952) suggested that for the majority of societies plumpness in females is considered attractive and in some cultures obesity has been admired or even considered a secondary sex characteristic (Rudofsky, 1972). Twenty years ago, Calden, Lundy, and



Schlafer (1959) reported that Western adolescent females report more positive attitudes toward a small body size except for busts. Moreover, self-satisfaction decreased as personal body size deviated from the social stereotype (Calden, Lundy, & Schlafer, 1959; Nylander, 1971).

The degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction felt about a part or process of the body is called body cathexis (Secord & Jourard, 1953). Secord and Jourard (1953) investigated the relationship between body cathexis and self-concept (self-cathexis). They developed a Body Cathexis/Self Cathexis Scale on the basis of self reports of college students. After many preliminary analyses and revisions, the final 46-item body cathexis and 55-item self cathexis instrument was given to 70 college males and 56 college females, along with a homonym test of body cathexis. An additional group of 47 college men and women were given the Body Cathexis/Self Cathexis Scale and the Maslow Test of Psychological Security-Insecurity. Results of this study indicated: (1) a moderate correlation between body cathexis and self-cathexis - both covaried in the same direction; (2) females cathected bodies more highly than men and showed more anxiety about their bodies than men; (3) low body cathexis was associated with undue concern over the body as indicated by the relationship between low scores on body cathexis and the homonym test; and (4) low body cathexis was associated with insecurity as indicated by the correlation of scores on the body cathexis scale and the Maslow Test of Psychological Security - Insecurity.

Witkin (1965) views body image as representing the individual's systematic impression of his/her body which forms over the course of

his/her development. This impression is both cognitive and affective and may be realistic or unrealistic. McMullen (1984) reports that psychological research has clearly shown that perceptions of one's appearance strongly influences personal self-esteem and social acceptability.

Research on body image substantiates the assertion that this is more of a problem for women than men. In a study investigating attitudes toward the body, Miller, Coffman, and Linke (1980) found that more undergraduate women than undergraduate men desired to be underweight; that men wanted to lose an average of 4 lbs. while women wanted to lose 14 lbs.; and, that women exhibited mild body image disturbance, while the men were realistic about their bodies. Calden, Lundy, and Schlafer (1959) administered a body concept questionnaire to male and female college students. They found that males wanted to be heavier while females wanted to weigh less. In general, women were dissatisfied with their bodies from the waist down and wished to be smaller, while men were dissatisfied from the waist up and wanted to be bigger. In a related study, Gray (1977) asked college students to judge themselves as being either under, over, or of normal weight. Gray then compared their actual weights to insurance tables. Men who misperceived their body size considered themselves to be lighter than they were, while females who misperceived their body size consistently considered themselves to be heavier. Females reported dieting more than males even though they were more likely to be underweight. Even high school females (Dwyer, Feldman, Seltzer & Mayer, 1969; Storz & Greene, 1983) misperceive their size and wish to weigh less. Not only did they choose smaller body image drawings to depict the ideal,



but these females also used negative adjectives to describe themselves and indicated strong dissatisfaction with their body image. Thompson (1986) asked one hundred women free of eating disorders to approximate the size of at least four parts of their own bodies (cheeks, waist, hips, and thighs). Results showed that more than 95 percent overestimated their body size by an average of one-fourth larger than actuality. When thirty men and thirty women were studied, Thompson (1986) found that women overestimated more than men (25% compared to 13%) on overall measurements. More inaccurate women felt worse about themselves, while men's self-esteem was unrelated to how accurately they perceived their bodies.

Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, and Thompson (1980) noted "there has been a shift in the idealized female shape from the voluptuous, curved figure to the angular, lean look of today." They point out that for the last twenty years women have tended towards greater thinness even though health tables have increased weight allowances. Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, and Thompson (1980) looked at popular magazines over a 20-year period and found an increase in diet articles over the past 10 years. The ideal standard of beauty for women has become thinner even though women are heavier now due to improved nutrition and also, perhaps, changes in exercise patterns. This places women under a great deal of pressure and negatively affects their body image.

In Women and Self-Esteem, Sanford and Donovan (1984) report that the majority of females studied in therapy groups over a five-year period habitually downgraded their worth, and poor body image was a central

factor in their self-rejection. Sanford and Donovan (1984) assert that one reason so many women experience their bodies as a problem is that American culture teaches women that they must be pretty to be worthy, and sets up beauty standards that are unhealthy and unattainable. They assert that the poor body image that underlies a variety of adjustment problems is largely a product of social conditioning. "Women are taught the standards currently worshipped as ideal and taught to equate self-worth with appearance."

According to Freedman (1986), because beauty is linked with femininity, the influence of body image on self-concept is greater for females than for males. A woman is more likely than a man to equate herself with what she looks like, or what she thinks she looks like, or what she believes others think she looks like. Freedman (1986) reports that studies show that women's self-concepts are correlated with their own perceptions of their attractiveness, whereas men's self-concepts relate more closely to perceptions of their effectiveness and their physical fitness. Men tend to judge themselves in terms of what they can do, whereas women tend to equate self-worth with good looks. Males view a competent self as also attractive, whereas a competent woman may or may not see herself as pretty. Furthermore, Freedman (1986) reports that men's evaluations of their own attractiveness correlate more highly than women's with other people's ratings. Men are more realistic and accurate in seeing themselves as others see them. Among women especially, there seems to be very little connection between actual physical attractiveness and their degree of contentment with their own body image (Adams, 1977).

Girls are socialized to seek the approval of parents and peers from earliest childhood. Conditioned to use an external frame of reference, their self-awareness is heavily "filtered through others" (Freedman, 1986). Freedman (1986) points out that while many roles are denied to females, that of beauty object is subtly as well as overtly encouraged. Objectification changes body image and erodes self-esteem. Once objectified, women's bodies can be reduced to a collection of parts through visual dissection (Freedman, 1986). Pierre (1976) reported a survey in which 90 percent of the men questioned said they focus first on a woman's legs as she passes, 8 percent focus on her breasts, and only 2 percent begin with the face.

According to Freedman (1986), as people watch women, women become preoccupied with being watched and become obsessed with whatever body part they think needs correction. "The myth of female beauty encourages objectification, escalates self-consciousness, and contributes to a crippling phobia (agoraphobia) that is found almost exclusively in women."

Heunemann, Shapiro, Hampton, and Mitchell (1966) have found that as many as 70% of high school females were unhappy with their bodies and wanted to lose weight. Furthermore, in North American women, higher social class is strongly related to thinness (Stunkard, 1975) and dieting (Goldblatt, Moore & Stunkard, 1965; Dwyer & Mager, 1970). A number of writers have linked the sociocultural pressures for thinness to the apparent increased incidence of anorexia nervosa (Brunch, 1973, 1978; Palazzoli, 1974; Boskind - Lodahl, 1976). Anorexia nervosa is an often

fatal disease in which women or men voluntarily starve themselves because they cannot realistically judge their body size (Bruch, 1973). No matter how small their bodies become, they believe they are too fat. Casper, Halmi, Goldberg, Eckert, and Davis (1979) found no difference in the degree of body image disturbance between normal controls and anorexic women. Both overestimated the size of their body parts and yet were able to correctly estimate the size of a block of wood. Bruch (1978) has referred to the increased incidence of anorexia nervosa as a "sociocultural epidemic" and has indicated that fashions' ideal may indirectly affect vulnerable adolescents who come to believe that weight control is equal to self control and will lead to beauty and success. The apparent increasing prevalence of anorexia nervosa and related eating disorders may well be linked to current cultural demands to be thinner (Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980). Women's desire for thinness causes body image disturbance in normal women as well as those with eating disorders.

"No one is free who is a slave to the body," wrote Seneca some 1,900 years ago (Berscheid, Walster & Bohrnstedt, 1973). Judging from the advertisements, products, and best sellers that deluge Americans daily, America is a nation of slaves. American society is obsessed with being thin, beautiful, young, and sexy, and individuals will go to extraordinary lengths to approach those ideals.

Physically attractive individuals are judged as possessing more socially desirable characteristics and are expected to have happier lives than unattractive people (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). Therefore, body image descriptions not only affect an individual's self-

perceptions, but a judgment of attractiveness or unattractiveness will also affect interpersonal relationships. In two studies investigating physical attractiveness and dating, Berscheid, Dion, Walster and Walster (1971) found that the physical attractiveness of female subjects was related to actual popularity to a greater extent than it was for male subjects. Mitchell and Orr (1976) found that in a self report college students who considered themselves as unattractive thought others would judge them to be less socially skilled. These students reported higher levels of anxiety than those who rated themselves as attractive. Miller (1970) had undergraduates record their impressions of a photograph of a person on an adjective preference scale. The photographs were of attractive and unattractive females and males that had been rated in a previous study. Consistently, highly attractive people were rated positively and highly unattractive people were rated negatively. Unattractive females were rated most negatively, particularly when these photographs were rated by women. According to Miller (1970), "If one must be unattractive, it is better fate to be male than female." Barocas and Karoly (1972) conducted a study investigating physical attractiveness as a variable in social interactions. The authors had male college students view a videotape of attractive and unattractive females and press buttons whenever they thought they would make a rapport-building response (smile, nod). They then rated the women on popularity, GPA, competitiveness, whether or not they would like to be her friend, her calmness, and her attractiveness. Attractive women received more rapport-building responses and were rated more positively. Even when adolescents rate stimulus figures, females deal more harshly with their own sex. Worsley (1981) had adolescents rate stimulus figures varying in sex and body size. The ratings were correlated with the sex, ethnicity, and weight



status of the rater. Females found the slim young woman "tough" and "confident" while males considered her unattractive. Females had more negative self images than the males, and for females perceptions of self, social role, and body image were all related. The females aspired toward submissiveness, weakness, and the development of anorexia nervosa. They rated the fat young woman more negatively than did the males. The greater the females perceived their own weight, the more they chose negative adjectives when describing themselves. This was not true for the males. In summary these studies show that not only do women exhibit body disturbances in their own self perceptions, but since they also react negatively to unattractive women, it is likely they expect others to react negatively to them. Since self concept is a perception of self learned through experiences with the self and others and the world, and self concept is also based on perceptions of how others react to the self (Fitts, Adams, Radford, Richard, Thjomas, Thomas, & Thompson 1971), it follows that unattractive women will have negative self-concepts.

According to Mahoney and Finch (1976), body image can be considered in terms of overall body size and the impression that body size makes on self and others, or it can be considered as elemental, in terms of feelings about specific parts of the body. For most parts of the body, males prefer largeness and females desire small size (Jourard & Secord, 1954). In a study of college women, Jourard and Secord (1955) examined the relationship between measured size, self estimated size, and self ratings of ideal size. Women compare their body size to a "shared concept of ideal or 'beautiful' dimensions" (Jourard & Secord, 1955). These college women had a mean age of 22.79. Results illustrated

positive body cathexis was associated with relatively small size, while negative body cathexis was associated with large size (except for the bust). The measured size correlated with their estimated size on height, weight, bust, waist, and hips for only five out of the sixty women. The other women believed they were too heavy, small busted, and their waist and hips were too large. There was little variability in relation to what they considered the ideal size, thus indicating a shared concept about the ideal figure. None of the women considered her own physical characteristics as matching the ideal and no one rated all their body parts positively.

Plutchik, Weiner, and Conte (1971) conducted a comprehensive study of body image in the elderly, a group of mental patients in their 30's, and a group of university students. Their findings indicate body discomfort and body worry (concern about health issues and the body's functions) were related and that body image was more disturbed for females than for males. In terms of specific body parts, females expressed higher discomfort than males on head, eyes, nose, mouth, arms, hands, fingers, thighs, legs and feet.

Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973) investigated the importance of each body part (from a list of twenty-four parts) to one's own body concept and how important each body part is for the physical attractiveness of the opposite sex. The results illustrated that women and men rated the importance of body parts for self and for the opposite sex in a similar manner with general appearance ranking first. For both sexes self-concept increased with feelings of body satisfaction; however, it was more pronounced for women. More body parts correlated with self-concept for women than for men. Lerner, Karabenick, and

Stuart also had subjects weigh how important they considered the attractiveness of each body part. These weightings did not increase the correlations. Mahoney (1974) confirmed these results with college undergraduates showing no increase in body concept or self-concept from weightings of subjective importance of body parts. Both the Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973) and the Mahoney (1974) studies were in response to Rosen and Ross (1968) who found that the correlation between body concept and self-concept needs to take into account the relative importance of each body part.

Kurtz (1969, 1971) confirmed a positive correlation between body concept and self-concept. However, in contrast to the majority of studies, Kurtz (1969, 1971) found that women evaluate their bodies more positively than men (i.e., they like their bodies more than men like their bodies). Although women's evaluation scores were higher on the semantic differential, the men rated their bodies more highly than did the women in the areas of potency and activity.

Mahoney and Finch (1976) criticized previous studies which partialled out specific body aspects for failure to use appropriate statistics. They studied the differential contribution of body aspects to self-esteem using multiple stepwise regression. One hundred and twenty nine females and 98 males completed Lerner's Body Cathexis Questionnaire and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The results confirmed a positive correlation between mean body cathexis and self-esteem. The stepwise regression which compares each body aspect to self-esteem resulted in 13 out of 23 male body aspects and 10 out of 21 female body



aspects functioning as negative suppressor variables. These negative suppressor variables share more variance with one or more independent variables which are correlated with self-esteem than with the dependent variable of self-esteem. Removing these negative suppressors left six body aspects for men which accounted for self-esteem (voice, chest circumference, teeth, nose, leg shape, and facial features) and left seven body aspects for women which accounted for self-esteem (overall physical attractiveness, teeth, hair color, voice, calves, height, hips). According to Mahoney and Finch (1976), dissatisfaction with bust, weight, and waist for women did not contribute to diminished self-esteem as other studies have implied.

In 1973 Psychology Today (Berscheid, Walster, & Bohrnstedt, 1973) surveyed 62,000 readers about their body image. Out of these 62,000 surveys, 2,000 were analyzed. Although this is a biased sample of individuals interested in psychological concepts as illustrated by their subscription to Psychology Today, and it is unclear how the 2,000 surveys were chosen to be analyzed (the authors did compare the results of these 2,000 to a random sample of reader responses to selected questions and were satisfied that they were equivalent), the results are interesting and worthy of examination. The questionnaire consisted of 109 items concerning a person's body image and satisfaction with his/her body. The first analysis of the survey resulted in five clusters of aspect of the body: mid-torso, breasts/chest, sex organs, face and extremities. Most respondents were satisfied with their bodies, but of those who were dissatisfied with their bodies more were women than men (16% vs 11%). Women slightly more than men considered physical

attractiveness to be important. For the male population, homosexual men were most concerned about body image. Women were concerned about weight and the size of their hips. This study examined three major age groups: 24 and younger, 25-44, and over 45. For men, body image improved with age. Women, even when older, were less satisfied with their bodies than men. With regard to the belief that body image is related to self-esteem, both sexes considered this to be true. Both sexes considered the face to be important for good body image and self-esteem. Men considered the chest important and for women it was the mid-torso. This reflects women's concern with weight. People who possessed average body images also considered themselves to be more likeable, assertive, conscientious, and intelligent than the average person. The Berscheid, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973) study also took a developmental perspective and found that feelings of childhood and adolescent beauty correlated with happiness in early life, but did not necessarily have an effect on feelings in later life. However, adolescent appearance does affect self-esteem and body image and this does affect feelings in later life for many people. Consistent with socialization processes, the questionnaire found that women more than men expend more effort in pleasing their partners. Results of this study should be viewed cautiously given the biased sample utilized.

Results of a body image survey conducted by Cash, Winstead, and Janda (1986) indicate that only 18 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women included in the 2,000 person analysis had little concern about their appearance and did little to improve it. Subjects were found to be considerably more dissatisfied with their bodies than were

the respondents to the survey conducted by Berscheid, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973). The pressure to look good seems to have intensified particularly for men; nevertheless, women were still less satisfied than men with their own appearance in all areas except face and height. It was found that subjects who cared about fitness and health had more positive feelings about their appearance than did subjects who were concerned with their appearance. The authors conclude that it may be that people who take a broader perspective about their bodies to include fitness and health have found a successful path to a happier body image.

Few studies appear to consider a developmental aspect; however, early socialization appears to emphasize the body and its functions for both sexes and particularly for women. In a theoretical article, Breit and Ferrandino (1979) discuss how female sexuality in the past was defined in terms of male sexuality. The clitoris was considered a miniature penis, which automatically negates a woman's body. Breit and Ferrandino also discuss how negatively women are taught to think about the biological function of menstruation: "It is a curse and they are unclean when they have it." Therefore, women learn to dislike not only their body image, but their bodily functions. On the other hand, Fisher (1973) considers the menstrual cycle to be positive for women and a cause for them to feel more comfortable with their bodies. He states that menstruation forces women to be caretakers of their bodies. Further, Fisher states "In consideration of the fact that a woman's body will someday contain children, the body becomes her identity." Fisher also points out that "women are trained to be able to deal with negative body functions such as the urine and feces of children and, therefore, are more able to accept these functions than men.

According to Fisher (1973), men are alienated from their bodies because they are socialized toward the intellect and are uncomfortable with their bodies due to the constant fear of attack. Women become conscious of their bodies at an early age through clothes and cosmetics. "A woman's body is, in most instances, an important part of how society defines her status" (Fisher, 1973). Fisher (1973) does admit that more women than men undergo cosmetic surgery. However, rather than associating this with women's discomfort about their bodies, he feels this is part of the flexibility women develop as young girls when striving to mold themselves to their mates.

From an Ericksonian developmental perspective, women's self-concept is tied to inner space and, therefore, internal body parts should relate to self-concept. For men it should be the opposite (Lerner & Brackney, 1978). An investigation by Lerner and Brackney (1978) failed to confirm this hypothesis. Although females knew their internal parts better than males did, external body parts predicted self-concept for females and internal body parts were related to self-concept for males.

One would expect a series of developmental changes in an individual's body concept. It seems reasonable that just as body image would become differentiated and consolidated over the years from childhood to adulthood, so too would changes occur in an individual's image of his or her body as the aging process progresses.

Bercheid, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973) divided respondents into three major age groups: 24 and younger, 25 to 44, and over 45. They found no differences among these groups in overall body image. If

anything, males showed a slight positive improvement in body image with age, especially in the mid-torso area. Women are generally less satisfied with their bodies than are men, and this difference does not dissipate with age. Physical appearance remains more important for women throughout the life cycle. Berschied, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973) reported that 33 percent of the respondents over 45 think that physical attractiveness is very important for most people, compared to 27 percent of respondents under 25.

One cannot conclude from the Berscheid, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973) data that people's body image does or does not change as they age. Their results are cross-sectional, not longitudinal. The similarity in body image among age groups may be a result of "cohort effects" - the effects of being born at a particular time. Nevertheless, the results of Berscheid, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973) suggest that body image may be a stable phenomenon over the years.

According to Freedman (1986), women's lives are marked by a precipitous drop in social value at mid-life. The emphasis on juvenile traits as being essential to feminine beauty means that older women are judged more harshly than men. Freedman (1986) states that aging is determined by social as well as biological factors. It is a state of mind as much as a state of matter. Time hangs more heavily on women because they are prematurely devalued. "Despite a life expectancy that is now nine years longer than men's, middle-aged women are seen as relatively older than their male contemporaries."

Sontag (1979) identified this bias as "the Double Standard of Aging." She emphasized that the differing standards of attractiveness for men and women are a major part of the problem, first because feminine beauty standards stress youthfulness more heavily than masculine standards, and second because these standards of attractiveness are applied more stringently to women than to men.

Freedman (1986) reports that research supports the assertion that the double standard of aging is linked with the emphasis on physical appearance. Attractiveness is judged to decline with age for both sexes, but faster for females. When subjects rated photos of the same people at youth, middle age, and old age, aging women were thought to diminish in attractiveness to a greater extent than aging men. Moreover, ratings of men's masculinity remain fairly constant over the life span, whereas women's femininity is perceived to be in rapid decline between youth and middle age (Deutsch, Clark, & Zalenski, 1983).

Freedman (1986) reports that masculinity is measured by strength, which is why aging men worry most about losing their ability to "perform" in the various arenas of life; femininity is measured by attractiveness, which is why aging women worry so much about losing their looks. "Many women report a sense of failure as they feel the core of their gender identity slipping away from them." Losing one's girlish beauty means losing a self-image that has been socialized since birth. According to Freedman (1986), pretty women have the most to lose, "A fading face is experienced as an overwhelming assault to someone whose good looks have always brought her instant attention." Freedman (1986) reports



that studies show that those women who were prettiest in college suffer more adjustment problems during middle age than those who were plainer-looking. However, Berscheid and Walster (1974) report men's adjustment to aging is unrelated to their former degree of attractiveness.

According to Freedman (1986), the double standard of aging is more than just a set of biased attitudes that diminish self-esteem. It translates into a set of statistics that describe reality for aging females - higher rates of singlehood, unemployment, hospitalization. As women lose their looks with age, they often lose their position in the world as well. Displaced as beauty objects, they are all too often displaced as workers, wives, and homemakers. Aging women are the fastest growing poverty group in this country (Freedman, 1986).

Physical attractiveness is a human trait, neither masculine nor feminine. The ultimate challenge is to shift the perception of beauty into neutral territory so that neither sex will bear the greater burden of it or receive the greater benefit from it. Freedman (1986) asserts that "as women gain access to the institutions that control society, they gain the means to shift beauty off the back of femininity and onto the gender-neutral position where it belongs." Freedman (1986) concludes that women "will be released from the bonds of the beauty myth when women can look as ordinary as men, and still be valued as normal, lovable human beings."

### Summary

Self-concept is the sum total of the view which an individual has of himself or herself (Felker, 1974). It is a unique factor in human



experience and a powerful influence on human behavior. Psychologists have pointed to the individual's self-concept as perhaps the single most influential factor in determining behavior (Girdano & Everly, 1979).

Self-concept operates to give individuals some internal consistency through a set of expectations and as interpreter of present and past experiences (Felker, 1974). The self-concept is also related positively to other desirable characteristics such as academic achievement, self-responsibility, level of aspirations, athletic performance, intelligence, industrial productivity, and expectations for success (Purkey, 1970; Felker, 1974; Combs, Avila & Purkey, 1973; Wylie, 1968; King & Manaster, 1977).

An individual's physical appearance influences self-concept. Body image is part of a larger self-concept (Berscheid, Walster & Bohrnstedt, 1973). Recent research has demonstrated a relationship between physique type and self-concept (Lerner, 1972; Lerner & Korn, 1972). These findings suggest that individuals holding positive body attitudes should have generally more positive self-concepts than those with negative body attitudes.

The relationship between satisfaction with one's overall physical characteristics (body-cathexis) and satisfaction with self (self-cathexis) has drawn frequent attention. A positive correlation has been reported between body cathexis and self-esteem (Mahoney, 1974; Rosen & Ross, 1968; Lerner, Karabenick & Stuart, 1973).

Women and men in our society undergo a different socialization process. From early childhood women are taught that their appearance is a crucial aspect of their lives; whereas, men are taught that their accomplishments are what counts. Not only is appearance important for women, but the appearance must come as close as possible to whatever the current media image of women happens to be. Often, that image can only be achieved by a minority of the population. The end result of this impossible quest is that most women are unhappy with their bodies and suffer from negative body image.

Freedman (1986) reports women's lives are marked by a precipitous drop in social value at mid-life. The double standard of aging is supported by research. Attractiveness is judged to decline with age for both sexes, but faster for females.

Body image disturbance is pervasive in American society, and especially common during the late adolescent, early adult years (Berscheid, Walster & Bohrnstedt, 1973). It is clear that women experience body image disturbance and that this disturbance is more pronounced for women than for men and occurs equally in normal women and those with eating disorders. Body concept and self-concept are related, not only for the woman herself but, also, in the way she judges other women and expects others (men and women) to judge her. Therefore, beliefs about the body may generalize to beliefs about other areas of women's lives. For women, it seems that body image has an exaggerated and irrational effect. Women misperceive their size as being larger, whereas men are more realistic in their body perceptions. No matter how small women are, they desire to be smaller, whereas men are realistic about their larger and heavier bodies and

actually desire larger, heavier bodies (Miller, Coffman & Linke, 1980).

Attractiveness affects interpersonal relationships in that attractive people are assigned more positive characteristics and expectations for a better life. This is more pronounced for women. Women appear to judge themselves and judge other women more harshly than men do (Barocas & Karoly, 1972; Miller, 1970; Worsley, 1981). Again, research supports more disturbance of body image in women than men and a greater number of body parts figure into the self-concept of women than for men (Mahoney & Finch, 1976).

It is true that men also have body image problems (Fisher, 1973). However, even though some men suffer from body image problems, it is mainly women who operate under the irrational belief that a person's identity is defined solely by their physical appearance.

From a developmental standpoint, women's body image disturbance may be related to the negative connotations placed on the functions of the body from the time of puberty (Breit & Ferrandino, 1979). Women's body images develop at an early age in response to their socialized roles and attitudes society holds about women and their bodies (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980).

Body image is an important aspect of a person's self-concept. A person's physical self is the outer shell which houses all of his or her inner feelings and as such it deserves to be recognized and understood

for whatever its potential is for eliciting social responses which contribute to an individual's overall concept of himself or herself.

### Significance of the Study

According to Hamachek (1971), the voluminous literature related to the idea of the self and self-concept leaves little doubt but that mental health and personal adjustment depends deeply on each individual's basic feelings of personal adequacy. Hutchison (1982) asserts that the interaction between negative body image and low self-esteem has been undervalued as a mental health issue. Despite the preponderance of females who suffer from distorted body image, clinicians tend either to ignore the phenomenon or to interpret it as evidence of serious psychopathology rather than as the product of a sick social system. According to Freedman (1986), distorted body image inhibits sexual expression, contributes to psychosomatic symptoms, and increases stress, shame, and guilt. It is implicated in such disorders as anorexia, obesity, agoraphobia, and depression.

Given that the majority of clients in therapy are women (Chester, 1972), that most women have body image problems, and some have severe body image problems resulting in the often fatal disease of anorexia nervosa, this study has relevance for the counseling of women. Further, the contemporary preoccupation with thinness affects both women and men. As women's roles continue to change and evolve, so too, are men's roles changing and expanding. American society has relatively recently begun to present, through the media, the ideal male image. Men are increasingly

being affected by similar societal pressures to conform to an ideal image. Therefore, this researcher believes this study also has relevance for the counseling of men.

The present study investigated the relations between self-concept, body image, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception. The study was designed to extend the findings of previous research on body image and self-concept, to determine the generalizability of the previous results of Rosen and Ross (1968), Gray (1977), Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973), Rand and Hall (1983) and Fallon and Rozin (1985). Further, this study was designed to obtain a more differentiated understanding of the relations among body image, importance of physical attractiveness, self-concept, and accuracy of people's perceptions of their own attractiveness.

The investigator studied the relationship between body-cathexis and self-satisfaction. In addition, this study examined the extent to which an individual's self-concept correlates with their ideal concept as well as the view other's hold of them. The study investigated for sex differences throughout. Considering the inordinate emphasis that American society places on being young, looking young, and acting young, this investigator examined possible age differences. In addition, this study examined individual's accuracy at assessing their own attractiveness using subject's self-ratings as predictors and judges' ratings of the subjects' photographs as criteria.

In view of possible sex differences, it was crucial to consider

the degree to which males and females agree and/or disagree about the relative importance of certain body parts in determining their own attractiveness. Another aspect of this issue involves the importance that persons place on various body parts for determining the attractiveness of the opposite sex. It was important to examine the relation of such ratings to opposite-sex importance, same-sex importance, and same-sex satisfaction of body characteristics to self-concept.

Gray (1977) reports that studies have pointed out the need to collect more data on the incidence of body-image disturbance in non-clinical populations. Further, there is evidence of a substantial amount of body image disturbance in the population at large with regard to both perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance and negative affect.

This study investigated body-image disturbance by examining perceptual distortion of weight through the use of a questionnaire and figure drawings as compared to the American Medical Association's standards for optimal weights based on age and height as well as the standards utilized by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. In addition, the relationship between perceptual distortion of body weight and body satisfaction were examined. Finally, the relationship of the social characteristics of sex, age, and actual body weight (underweight, normal weight, overweight) to body image distortion were investigated.



### Statement of Hypotheses

It was hypothesized that:

- (1) More females than males will report dieting attempts.
- (2) More females than males will respond positively to the statement "When I look in the mirror, I feel badly about all the food I've recently eaten."
- (3) Mean body satisfaction ratings will be significantly related to self concept among both males and females.
- (4) There will be a significant correlation between body cathexis and self cathexis.
- (5) There will be a significant relationship between body cathexis and self esteem.
- (6) There will be a significant relationship between self cathexis and self concept.
- (7) Self esteem will be significantly related to self concept.
- (8) There will be a significant relationship between self esteem and self cathexis.
- (9) There will be a significant relationship between self-reported "current" body type and body satisfaction.
- (10) Self cathexis and self-evaluation of attractiveness will be significantly related.
- (11) Self esteem and self-evaluation of attractiveness will be significantly related.
- (12) There will be a significant relationship between body cathexis and an individual's self-evaluation of attractiveness.

- (13) Body cathexis and an individual's prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness will be significantly related.
- (14) There will be a significant relationship between an individual's self-evaluation of attractiveness and their rating of how they think others perceive their attractiveness.
- (15) There will be a significant correlation between subjects' self-ratings of attractiveness and judges' ratings of subject attractiveness.
- (16) There will be a significant relationship between subjects' ratings of the importance of body characteristics of their same sex (Scale A) and their ratings of importance of the body characteristics of the opposite sex (Scale B) in determining physical attractiveness.
- (17) Self concept will be significantly related to ideal self concept.
- (18) Self concept will be significantly related to "reflected-self" scores.
- (19) Self cathexis will be significantly related to "reflected-self" scores.
- (20) Self cathexis and an individual's prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness will be significantly related.
- (21) Self cathexis and the judges' ratings of subject attractiveness will be significantly related.

- (22) Self esteem and an individual's prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness will be significantly related.
- (23) There will be a significant relationship between body cathexis and "reflected-self" scores.
- (24) There will be a significant relationship between "ideal" self concept and "reflected-self" concept.
- (25) There will be a significant relationship between "reflected-self-partner" and "reflected-self-friends" scales of the Self Perception Inventory.
- (26) There will be a significant relationship between self esteem and "ideal" self concept.
- (27) There will be a significant difference between males and females with low, moderate, and high self concept as assessed by their body satisfaction ratings.
- (28) There will be a significant difference between males and females in body satisfaction (body cathexis).
- (29) There will be a significant difference in body satisfaction between age groups.
- (30) There will be a significant difference between males and females in self cathexis.
- (31) There will be no significant age differences in self satisfaction.
- (32) There will be a significant difference between males and females in accuracy of self-perception of attractiveness.
- (33) There will be a significant difference between males and females in estimating what the opposite sex finds attractive.

- (34) There will be a significant difference between males and females in the relationship of "current" figure to "most attractive" figure.
- (35) There will be a significant difference between "current" figure and "ideal" figure for female subjects.
- (36) There will not be a significant difference between "current" figure and "ideal" figure for male subjects.
- (37) There will be a significant relationship between self-perceived weight-related appearance and body cathexis.
- (38) There will be a significant difference between overweight respondents and other respondents in body satisfaction.
- (39) There will be a significant difference between males and females with regard to perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance.
- (40) There will be a significant difference between individuals who are underweight or overweight and average weight respondents in perceptual distortion of their weight-related appearance.

## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

The intent of this study was to investigate the relations among self-concept, body image, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perceptions.

Subjects

The subjects for this study consisted of male and female Kansas State University undergraduates and graduate students as well as residents from a residential retirement center in Wichita, Kansas, and volunteers solicited at the Western Veterinary Convention. Subjects ranged in age from 17 to 79 years old. They were all volunteers. A sample of 150 male and female subjects was sought in order to provide for the probable reduction in sample size which occurs due to experimental mortality. It was desired that a sample of at least 70 female and 70 male subjects could be included in the data analysis. A sample of 128 female and 87 male subjects was obtained.

Method of Sampling

The subjects were contacted via announcements on bulletin boards at the retirement center and at the Western Veterinary Conference, as well as via announcement in the Kansas State University school newspaper; also, in undergraduate Public Speaking, Psychology, Sociology, Educational Psychology and Counseling classes as well as several graduate level Education and Psychology classes. Kansas State University is a medium-

sized state university in a suburban community. Subjects were requested to contact the investigator in order to participate in a research study investigating the various ways in which people view themselves and the accuracy of self-perception. A sign-up sheet was also circulated in the various classes and in the retirement center. Subjects were scheduled and informed of their assigned session time and location.

### Materials and Instrumentation

A short 15-item questionnaire was utilized to gather demographic statistics (height, weight, age, etc.) as well as information concerning body image beliefs (see Appendix A). Subjects were presented with nine figure drawings (designed and illustrated in Stunkard, Sorenson & Schulsinger, 1980) of each sex ranging ordinally from very thin to very heavy (see Appendix B). Each figure corresponded to a number from 1 to 9 (1 = thinnest). Subjects were asked to indicate the figure (a) that approximates their current figure (CURRENT), (b) they would like to look like (IDEAL), (c) that they thought would be most attractive to the opposite sex (ATTRACTIVE), and (d) of the opposite sex that they found most attractive (OTHER ATTRACTIVE).

Body appearance satisfaction was defined and measured in terms of the scores on the Body Cathexis Scale (Secord & Jourard, 1953). This scale consists of 46 body parts and functions. Subjects rated each item on a Likert scale, 1 - 5, 1 representing the wish for change and 5, considering self fortunate.

A total score was formed for each subject by summing the scores for each body part item over the 46 items on the scale. Reported



reliability for the Body Cathexis Scale is .83. Split-half reliability is reported at .81. Rosen and Ross (1968) report a test-retest reliability of .84 ( $p < .01$ ) for a modified version of this scale, Bauste (1971) reports a test-retest reliability of .73. An internal consistency reliability of .83 was obtained by King and Manaster (1977) using a modified version of the Body Cathexis Scale. Jean (1982) also used a modified version of the Body Cathexis Scale in her dissertation and reported .86 for reliability.

Subjects responded to two additional scales which have been modified from Secord and Jourard (1953) (see Appendix C). Scales A and B each present a list of 34 body characteristics. With Scale A, subjects rated each body characteristic in terms of how "important" each characteristic is to them (i.e., how important each characteristic is in determining how physically attractive they themselves are). Response alternatives ranged from "5" = "very important" to "1" = "very unimportant". With Scale B, subjects rated each body part in terms of how important each characteristic is to them in determining the physical attractiveness of members of the opposite sex. Response alternatives were identical to those of Scale A.

The Self-Cathexis Scale (Secord & Jourard, 1953) was utilized as one measure of self-esteem or self-satisfaction because it has been used in previous research investigating the relation between attitudes about the body and attitudes about the self (Johnson, 1956; Secord & Jourard, 1953; White & Wash, 1965; King & Manaster, 1977). The subject was instructed to indicate, using a 5 - point scale, degree of

satisfaction with a list of 55 items considered to represent a global sampling of the various conceptual aspects of self. Secord and Jourard (1953) report a split-half reliability of .88 for males and .92 for females, whereas Johnson (1956) reports a test-retest reliability of .74. King and Manaster (1977) report an internal consistency reliability of .87. None of the items in this scale make direct reference to physical attributes or body parts.

The Adult Forms of the Self-Perception Inventory (SPI) were utilized in order to assess how an individual sees himself/herself, how he/she thinks others see him/her, and the individual's ideal self (Soares & Soares, 1985). According to Soares and Soares (1985), the concept of self, like any concept, is an abstract idea generalized from particular instances. "It comprises a system of perceptions which the organism formulates of the self in awareness of its distinctive existence." They state "since it is a construct which is inferred from behavior and which evolves from experience, this concept of self as perceived is measurable." The behavior inferred and measured in the Self-Perception Inventory (SPI) is operationally defined by the individual responses concerning the perceptions of the self. The instrument is a forced-choice type of semantic differential containing four categories maintained along a continuum between two adjectives opposite in meaning. This format thereby provides both direction and intensity of response.

The Adult Forms of the SPI contain 36 pairs of dichotomous traits and therefore use 72 adjectives. They are appropriate for college students and adults. This investigation utilized four of the scales:

Self Concept - how the individual sees himself/herself as a person;  
 Reflected Self/Friends - how the individual thinks friends look at him/  
 her as a person; Reflected Self/Partners; and Ideal Concept - how the  
 individual would like to be.

Each of the SPI scales is scored the same way. With four spaces of distance between the two ends of the continuum, the "very" position on the positive side receives a score of +2; the "more" positive, a score of +1; "more" negative, -1; and "very" negative, -2. The algebraic sum of these individual dimension scores yields an index score for each measure of the self or for each measure of someone else. The index scores and item ratings can be compared across scales and then profiled on a chart for a composite picture of the individual's self-perceptions.

Soares and Soares (1985) report a validity coefficient for self-concept as measured by the adult forms with the MMPI of .72. Test-retest reliability is reported to be .88 and an internal consistency of .79 to .94 is reported.

A second measure of self-concept, the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSET), was employed to measure attitudes toward the self in social, academic and personal contexts. In relation to the Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI), the term "self-esteem" refers to the evaluation a person makes, and customarily maintains, of himself or herself. Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness expressed in the attitudes a person holds toward the self.

The SEI was developed in conjunction with an extensive study of self-esteem in children (Coopersmith, 1967). The major basis for the study was the widely held belief that self-esteem is significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective function.

The current investigation utilized the Adult Form of the SEI. This form is used with persons aged sixteen and above. It consists of twenty-five items adapted from the School Short Form. The correlation of total scores on the School Short Form and the Adult Form exceeds .80 for three samples of high school and college students ( $N = 647$ ) (Coopersmith 1986). Spatz and Johnson (1973) reported internal consistency coefficients ranging from .80 to .86. Kimball (1972) obtained coefficients for internal consistency ranging from .87 to .92. In other studies using the SEI, Fullerton (1972) reported a split-half reliability coefficient of .87.

Donaldson (1974) calculated subscale intercorrelations for 643 public school children. Obtained coefficients range from .02 to .52. Coopersmith (1967) reported test-retest reliability for the SEI to be .88 for a sample of 50 children in grade 5 (five-week interval) and .70 for a sample of 56 children (three-year interval). Bedeian, Geagud, and Zmud (1977) computed test-retest reliability estimates for 103 college students. Coefficients are .80 for males and .82 for females.

A study of SEI construct validity was reported by Kokenes (1974, 1978). Her study "confirmed the construct validity of the subscales proposed by Coopersmith as measuring sources of self-esteem."

## Procedure

Each subject attended one experimental session. Upon arrival at the session, the subject was greeted outside the experimental room by the investigator. Subjects were tested in groups. The subject was assured of privacy during the session and that their name could not in any way be associated with their responses. Subjects were informed that the experimenter was investigating the various ways in which people view themselves, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception and that they would be asked to spend approximately 20 to 30 minutes in order to (1) complete an information questionnaire, (2) view and rate nine figure drawings, (3) complete a series of scales (4) complete the Self-Perception Inventory, and (5) complete the Coopersmith Inventory. The experimenter escorted the subject into the experimental room and instructed them to sit at a table. Each subject was given a packet containing an information questionnaire ("Part A"), the figure drawings questionnaire ("Part B"), the Body Cathexis Scale ("Part C), Scales A and B ("Part D"), the Self Cathexis Scale ("Part E"), the Self-Perception Inventory ("Part F"), the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Part G"), a cover letter, an instructions page, consent form, and a green results request card. The investigator instructed the subject to read the cover letter carefully (see Appendix D). Next, the subject was asked to read and sign a consent form (see Appendix E), to separate the form from the other materials and place it in the envelope marked "Consent Forms." The subject was informed that he or she was free to drop-out at any time. The experimenter then instructed the subject to read the instructions page contained in the packet (see Appendix F) carefully and simply follow the directions on the materials



as he or she worked through the session.

Each set of response sheets was numbered prior to the sessions so that, while particular subject's responses could not be identified, corresponding parts could be ascertained.

Before signing the consent form, subjects were told that if they chose to participate, a photograph would be taken of them at the end of the session. The investigator explained the photographs would be assigned numeric codes corresponding to the subject's answer sheets, and their names would in no way be associated with the answer sheets or photographs. Their anonymous photographs were rated for physical attractiveness by the female experimenter and five students from another university (three males and two females) in order to compare the subject's self-perception to others' perception of them.

Previous studies using similar rating methods report the differences in reliability between male and female raters were very small. Consequently, male and female raters were pooled (Rand & Hall, 1983; Berscheid, Dion, Walster & Walster, 1971; Murstein, 1972). Rand and Hall (1983) report fifty-five students' photographs were rated for physical attractiveness on a nine-point scale by fourteen female and eight male judges. The judgments by the photograph raters were highly reliable and similar for both male and female subjects. Alpha coefficients of internal consistency were .90 for all subjects (.93 for female subject, .90 for male subjects).



After completing the packet of materials, subjects were photographed individually for a full-length, frontal view, color photograph. Each of the photographs was rated on a five-point Likert scale: "Overall, how physically attractive would you say this individual is?" The ratings were pooled and a mean attractiveness rating was obtained for each subject. This enabled the investigator to examine sex and age differences in men's and women's accuracy at assessing their own attractiveness, using subject's self-ratings as predictors and judges' ratings of the subjects' photographs as the criteria.

At the conclusion of each subject's session, the researcher provided them with a debriefing sheet (see Appendix G).

### Data Analysis

In order to address the hypothesis that more females than males will report dieting attempts, a frequency distribution was constructed and percentages of males and females were calculated relative to number of dieting attempts made in the last twelve months. A frequency distribution was also constructed for female's and male's reports related to the statement "When I look in the mirror, I feel badly about all the food I've recently eaten." Percentages were calculated for the five response values separately for males and females so that the two sexes could be compared.

In order to test the hypothesis that a general relationship exists between body image and self-concept, the mean male and female ratings

of their own body characteristics satisfaction scores (Body Cathexis Scale scores) were correlated with their self-concept scores (Self Perception Inventory - Self-Concept Scale scores).

Correlation coefficients were computed to analyze data on the relationships between body cathexis and self cathexis, body cathexis and self-esteem, self cathexis and self-concept, and self-esteem and self-concept. Additional correlation coefficients were calculated to study the relationships between self-esteem and self cathexis, self cathexis and self-evaluation of attractiveness, self-esteem and self-evaluation of attractiveness, and body cathexis and self-evaluation of attractiveness. It was necessary to compute correlation coefficients in order to analyze data on the relationships between self-reported "current" body type and body cathexis, body cathexis and the ratings which individual's predicted others would give their attractiveness, self-evaluation of attractiveness and subjects' ratings of how they thought others perceived their attractiveness, and subjects' self-ratings of attractiveness and judges' ratings of subject attractiveness. Further, a correlation coefficient was computed in order to analyze data on the relationship between subjects' ratings of the importance of body characteristics of their same sex (Scale A) and their ratings of the importance of body characteristics of the opposite sex (Scale B) in determining physical attractiveness. Additional correlational coefficients were calculated for the relationships between body cathexis and self-perceived weight-related appearance, self concept and ideal self concept, self concept and reflected-self concept, reflected-self concept and self-cathexis. Also, correlation coefficients were computed

in order to analyze the relationships between self cathexis and subjects' predictions of others' ratings of their attractiveness, self cathexis and judges' ratings of subject attractiveness, and self-esteem and subjects' predictions of others' ratings of attractiveness. Finally, correlation coefficients were calculated to analyze data on the relationships between body cathexis and reflected-self concept, ideal self concept and reflected-self concept, reflected-self-partner and reflected-self-friends, and self-esteem and self concept.

Subjects were asked to indicate their sex, age, height, and frame size on the information questionnaire. This information was used to establish whether or not each respondent's weight fell within the range of weights indicated as "desirable" by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's standards (1959) and the range of weights indicated as "optimal" by the American Medical Association (Dorth Coombs Insurance, Inc., 1977). The ranges in the tables were used as cutting points. If the respondent fell within the range, he or she was considered to be of normal weight. If the respondent fell 15% above or below the range, he or she was considered, respectively, overweight or underweight. This classification was then used as the criterion for comparing the respondent's perception of their body as underweight, average weight, or overweight. Since the insurance standards were derived through sampling, it was believed reasonable to assume that, in general, the sample utilized for this study had standards for weight-related appearance which were consistent with them and that deviations from those standards could be attributed to perceptual causes.

The percentages of the total sample that were underweight, average weight, and overweight according to the insurance standards were calculated. The percentages were also calculated separately for males and females. Next, the percentages of the total sample that perceived themselves as underweight, average weight, and overweight were computed. The percentages were also calculated separately for males and females. The percentage of respondents whose perceived weight-related appearance corresponded to the standards was calculated. Finally, the percentage of respondents that perceived themselves as weighing more than they actually did and the percentage of respondents that perceived themselves as weighing less than they did was calculated.

A 2x3 Analysis of Variance was utilized to analyze whether there was significant difference in body satisfaction between overweight respondents and other respondents as well as to analyze differences between males and females. A point-biserial correlation coefficient was calculated in order to analyze the relationship between body cathexis and self-perceived weight-related appearance. Chi-square was utilized in the analysis of the differences between overweight or underweight individuals and average weight respondents in perceptual distortion of their weight-related appearance. Chi-square was also utilized in the analysis of whether males and females differ significantly with regard to perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance.

A 2x3 Analysis of Variance was utilized to analyze whether there were significant differences between males and females with low, moderate,

and high self concept as assessed by their body cathexis ratings. The main effects were sex (male and female) and self concept category (low, moderate, and high). The dependent variable was body cathexis.

Analysis of variance was computed to study differences between males and females in body satisfaction. A 2x3 Analysis of Variance was utilized to study the difference between age groups as well as differences between males and females in regard to body cathexis (body satisfaction). The independent variables were sex (male and female) and age category (one, two, three). The dependent measure was body cathexis.

A 2x3 Analysis of Variance was performed to study whether or not there were significant sex and/or age differences in self satisfaction. A one-way analysis of variance (self cathexis  $\times$  age category) was also calculated.

Several t-tests were performed to study differences between males and females in body satisfaction and self satisfaction. In order to analyze data related to the hypothesis that there will be a significant difference between males and females in the relationship of "current" figure to "most attractive" figure, it was necessary to first calculate a difference score ("current" - "body type") for each subject and then compute means for males and females; and, finally, to perform a t-test. A t-test was also performed in order to determine if there was a significant difference between "current" figure and "ideal figure" for female subjects. Additionally, a t-test was utilized to analyze data related to the hypothesis that there will not be a significant difference between "current" figure and "ideal" figure for male subjects. Means

were calculated for each sex for accuracy of self-perception of attractiveness. The means were then compared and a t-test was performed in order to analyze differences between males and females in accuracy of self-perception of attractiveness. Finally, t-tests were performed in order to determine if there was a significant difference between males and females in estimating what the opposite sex finds attractive.

In all statistical tests of significance, .05 was selected as the confidence level.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This study was an investigation of the relations between self concept, body image, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception. This chapter summarizes the data collected and the statistical treatment of them.

In order to analyze data related to hypothesis 1 which stated that more females than males will report dieting attempts, a frequency distribution was constructed and percentages of males and females were calculated relative to the number of dieting attempts made in the last twelve months. Upon inspecting the data provided in Table 1, at least two things become apparent. First, a far greater percentage of males than females report zero dieting attempts. Second, a greater percentage of females report numerous attempts at dieting within the last twelve months than did males.

A Frequency distribution was also constructed for data collected relative to hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 stated that more females than males will respond positively to the statement "When I look in the mirror, I feel badly about all the food I've recently eaten." Percentages were calculated separately for males and females for the five response values (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree). As shown in Table 2, more males disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, while more females

Table 1

Reported Dieting Attempts in the Last Twelve Months

Value	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0	68	78	39	30
1	5	6	21	16
2	7	8	21	16
3	5	6	15	12
4	1	1	13	10
5	1	1	4	3
6			2	2
7				
8			1	1
9				
10			3	2
11				
12			6	5
24			2	2
33			1	1
		<u>N</u> = 87	<u>N</u> = 128	

Note. Value = number of dieting attempts

Table 2

Response to Mirror Gazing and Food Recently Eaten.

Value	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	37	43	10	8
2	21	24	21	16
3	16	18	43	34
4	11	13	43	34
5	2	2	11	9
		N males = 87	N females = 128	

Note. Value = Response to statement "When I look in the mirror, I feel badly about all the food I've recently eaten." 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

responded positively.

In order to analyze data relative to hypothesis 3 through hypothesis 26, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed.

Hypothesis 3. Mean body satisfaction ratings will be significantly related to self concept among both males and females.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a correlation of .3225,  $p < .0001$  between body cathexis (body satisfaction) and self concept for the total sample. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a correlation of .3928,  $p < .0001$  for the males and a Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a correlation of .2786,  $p < .001$  for the females. Results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4. There will be a significant correlation between body cathexis and self cathexis.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a correlation of .6068,  $p < .0001$  for the total sample. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient of .6965,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for the male subjects and a correlation of .5635,  $p < .0001$  was revealed for the female subjects. Results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5. There will be a significant relationship between body cathexis and self-esteem.

Results obtained support this hypothesis. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed and a correlation of .2001,  $p < .005$  was obtained. It is interesting to note that a nonsignificant correlation was obtained for the male subjects ( $r = .1535$ ,  $p = .158$ ) while a correlation of .4570,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for the female subjects.

Hypothesis 6. There will be a significant relationship between self cathexis and self concept.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and a correlation of .6538,  $p < .0001$  was revealed. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also calculated for males and females separately. A correlation of .4908,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for males and a correlation of .7457,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for female subjects. Results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 7. Self-esteem will be significantly related to self concept.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were run for the total sample and for males and females. A correlation of .2123,  $p < .005$  was obtained for the total sample while a correlation of .6425,  $p < .0001$  was revealed for female subjects. A non-significant correlation of .1277,  $p = .241$  was obtained for males.

Hypothesis 8. There will be a significant relationship between self-esteem and self cathexis.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the total sample and a correlation of .2965,  $p < .001$  was obtained. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were also computed separately for males and females. Correlations of .3449,  $p < .001$  and .4758,  $p < .0001$  were obtained, respectively. Results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 9. There will be a significant relationship between self reported "current" body type and body satisfaction.

Results revealed an inverse relationship. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed and a correlation of - .1544,  $p < .05$  was obtained.

Hypothesis 10. Self cathexis and self evaluation of attractiveness will be significantly related.

Results support a relationship. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a correlation of .1916,  $p < .005$  for the total sample. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were obtained for the males and females separately and revealed a correlation of .2167,  $p < .05$  for the males and a correlation of .1789,  $p < .05$  for the female subjects.

Hypothesis 11. Self-esteem and self-evaluation of attractiveness will be significantly related.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and a correlation of .1613,  $p < .05$  was obtained. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the female subjects and a



correlation of .2357,  $p < .05$  was obtained. The relationship was not significant for the male subjects.

Hypothesis 12. There will be a significant relationship between body cathexis and an individual's self-evaluation of attractiveness.

Results support a significant relationship. It is interesting to note the results show a stronger relationship between body cathexis and self-evaluation of attractiveness for females than males. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed for the total sample, males, and females. The correlations obtained were .3743,  $p < .0001$ ; .2899,  $p < .01$ ; and .4050,  $p < .0001$ , respectively.

Hypothesis 13. Body cathexis and an individual's prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness will be significantly related.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed and a correlation of .4140,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for the total sample. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the female subjects and a correlation of .4509,  $p < .0001$  was revealed. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was also computed for the male subjects and a correlation of .3394,  $p < .001$  was obtained. The results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 14. There will be a significant relationship between an individual's self-evaluation of attractiveness and their rating of how they think others perceive their attractiveness.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed for the total sample and separately for males and females. A correlation of .5540,  $p < .0001$  was revealed for the total sample. Correlations of .4742,  $p < .0001$  and .5918,  $p < .0001$  were obtained for males and females, respectively. The results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 15. There will be a significant correlation between subjects' self-ratings of attractiveness and the judges' ratings of subject attractiveness.

This hypothesis was rejected on the basis of a Pearson Correlation Coefficient which revealed the relationship was not significant.

Hypothesis 16. There will be a significant relationship between subjects' ratings of the importance of body characteristics of their same sex (Scale A) and their ratings of the importance of body characteristics of the opposite sex (Scale B) in determining physical attractiveness.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the total sample and a correlation of .7232,  $p < .0001$  was obtained. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was also calculated for the male subjects and a correlation of .7874,  $p < .0001$  was obtained. Additionally, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the female subjects and revealed a correlation of .7194,  $p < .0001$ .

Means and standard deviations were calculated for each item on

Scale A and each item on Scale B. The means were rank ordered so that comparisons could be made between items on the two scales. (see Table 3). Data in Table 3 have been coded so that "5" represents the very important and "1" represents the very unimportant ends of the scales (Scales A and B, respectively). The same ten items appeared as the top ten for each scale; however, they did not appear in the same order. The ranking similarity suggests that most of the selected body characteristics play a similar role for individuals in determining their judgement of their own physical attractiveness and the physical attractiveness of opposite-sex members.

Hypothesis 17. Self concept will be significantly related to ideal self concept.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was obtained for the total sample and a correlation of .3673,  $p < .0001$  was revealed. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed a correlation of .2663,  $p < .05$  for males and a correlation of .4480,  $p < .0001$  for females. The results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 18. Self-concept will be significantly related to "reflected-self" scores.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and a correlation of .7369,  $p < .0001$  was revealed for the relationship between self concept and reflected-self-friends (SC Scale and RSF Scale of the Self Perception Inventory). In addition, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and

Table 3

Means and Ranks of Importance of Body Characteristics for Own and  
Opposite-Sex Physical Attractiveness

Body Characteristics	Own			Opposite-Sex		
	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rank	$\bar{X}$	SD	Rank
Hair	3.939	.788	6	3.864	.814	6
Facial Complexion	4.014	.741	5	4.047	.762	4
Hands	2.752	.861	26	2.794	.922	26
Distribution of Hair over Body	2.874	.987	23	3.098	1.037	20
Nose	3.327	.891	15	3.192	.864	17
Fingers	2.570	.857	29	2.617	.895	29
Wrists	2.332	.843	33	2.224	.761	34
Waist	3.724	.801	9	3.720	.875	9
Back	2.883	.950	22	3.005	.917	23
Ears	2.696	.859	28	2.692	.871	28
Chin	3.028	.839	19	2.991	.861	24
Ankles	2.336	.882	31	2.327	.880	33
Neck	2.855	.806	24	2.874	.815	25
Shape of Head	3.042	.941	18	3.042	.916	22
Body Build	4.121	.741	2	4.182	.718	1
Profile	3.579	.834	12	3.607	.901	11.5
Height	3.304	.943	16.5	3.547	.947	14
Age	2.799	1.058	25	3.154	1.092	18
Width of Shoulders	3.005	.952	21	3.140	.944	19
Arms	3.019	.850	20	3.051	.868	21
Chest	3.551	.784	13	3.607	.880	11.5
Eyes	4.019	.864	4	4.131	.812	3
Hips	3.609	.852	11	3.589	.954	13
Lips	3.358	.847	14	3.533	.907	15
Legs	3.665	.853	10	3.673	.891	10
Teeth	3.777	.807	7	3.799	.829	7
Forehead	2.726	.805	27	2.701	.901	27
Feet	2.321	.894	34	2.333	.888	32
Knees	2.479	.869	30	2.444	.874	30
Posture	3.749	.833	8	3.757	.803	8
Face	4.228	.791	1	4.168	.763	2
Weight	4.098	.845	3	4.028	.804	4
Back View of Head	2.335	.937	32	2.369	.914	31
Trunk	3.304	.881	16.5	3.280	.927	16

Note. Own = Scale A and Opposite-Sex = Scale B

a correlation of .6824,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for the relationship between self concept and reflected-self-partner (SC and RSR Scales of the Self Perception Inventory). Results supported the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 19. Self cathexis will be significantly related to reflected-self scores.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients revealed correlations of .4746,  $p < .0001$  and .5546,  $p < .001$  for the relationships between self cathexis and reflected-self-friends and self cathexis and reflected-self-partner, respectively. These correlations were calculated for the total sample. The results support the hypothesis. The relationship between self cathexis and reflected-self-partner is stronger than the relationship between self cathexis and reflected-self-friends.

Hypothesis 20. Self cathexis and an individual's prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness will be significantly related.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient computed on the total sample revealed a correlation of .1530,  $p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 21. Self cathexis and the judges' ratings of subject attractiveness will be significantly related.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated on the total sample and a correlation of .1505,  $p < .05$  was obtained. The relationship between self cathexis and the judges' ratings of subject attractiveness is significant.

Hypothesis 22. Self esteem and an individual's prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness will be significantly related.

It is interesting to note that the hypothesis was rejected for the males based on a Pearson Correlation Coefficient which revealed no significant relationship existed; however, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient computed for the females revealed a correlation of .2623,  $p < .005$ . A Pearson Correlation Coefficient computed for the total sample revealed a correlation of .1521,  $p < .05$ .

Hypothesis 23. There will be a significant relationship between body cathexis and reflected-self scores.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and a correlation of .1791,  $p < .01$  was obtained for the relationship between body cathexis and reflected-self friends (Body Cathexis Scale and RSF Scale of Self Perception Inventory). It is interesting to note that no significant relationship was found for the female subjects based on calculation of a Pearson Correlation Coefficient; however, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient computed for the male subjects revealed a correlation of .2430,  $p < .05$ .

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the total sample and a correlation of .3733,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for the relationship between body cathexis and reflected-self-partner (Body Cathexis Scale and RSR Scale of the Self Perception Inventory). Separate Pearson Correlation Coefficients were calculated for males



and females and correlations of .3571,  $p < .001$  and .3541,  $p < .0001$  were obtained, respectively.

Hypothesis 24. There will be a significant relationship between "ideal" self concept and "reflected-self."

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and a correlation of .3357,  $p < .0001$  was obtained for the relationship between ideal self concept and reflected self-friends (IC Scale and RSF Scale of the Self Perception Inventory). Additionally, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated for the total sample and a correlation of .3320,  $p < .0001$  was revealed (IC Scale and RSR Scale of the Self Perception Inventory). Results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 25. There will be a significant relationship between "reflected-self-partner" and "reflected-self-friends" as measured by the Self Perception Inventory.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed and revealed a correlation of .5838,  $p < .0001$ . Results support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 26. There will be a significant relationship between self-esteem and ideal self concept.

Results revealed an inverse relationship. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed for the total sample and a correlation of

$-.2283$   $p < .001$  was obtained. Additionally, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were calculated for males and females separately and a correlation of  $-.3584$ ,  $p < .001$  was obtained for males, while the relationship was not found to be significant for females.

Tables 4 and 5 facilitate comparison between hypotheses 3 through 26 and enables the reader to study the relationships between the variables.

Hypothesis 27. There will be a significant difference between males and females with low, moderate, and high self-concept as assessed by their body satisfaction ratings.

A 2x3 Analysis of Variance was utilized. The independent variables were sex (male and female) and self concept category (low, moderate, and high). The dependent measure was body cathexis. The mean score for males was 3.51, and the mean score for females was 3.32. In order, means for self concept categories 1 through 3 (low through high) were 3.03, 3.39, and 3.87. The analysis of variance indicated a significant main effect of sex,  $F(1, 208) = 10.318$ ,  $p < .01$ . The analysis of variance indicated a significant main effect of self concept category,  $F(2, 208) = 27.684$ ,  $p < .0001$ . However, the two-way interaction was not found to be significant. A Tukey HSD follow-up was not performed due to the unequal sizes of groups.

Hypothesis 28. There will be a significant difference between males and females in body satisfaction.

Table 4

Correlations Among Self Concept, Body Cathexis, Self Cathexis, Self Esteem and Body Type

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Body Cathexis							
2. Self Cathexis	.61***						
3. Self Concept	.32***	.65***					
4. RSF	.18**	.48***	.74***				
5. RSR	.37***	.56***	.68***	.58***			
6. Ideal Self	.03	.11	.37***	.34***	.33***		
7. Self Esteem	.20**	.27***	.21**	.21**	.12	-.23**	
8. Type	-.15*	-.01	.07	.03	-.03	-.01	-.02

Note. RSF = Reflected-Self-Friends Scale of the Self Perception Inventory;  
RSR = Reflected-Self-Partner Scale of the Self Perception Inventory; Type =  
subjects' current body type (1 = very thin to 9 = very heavy)

\*p .05    \*\*p .01    \*\*\*p .0001

Table 5

Correlations Among Body Cathexis, Self Cathexis, Self Esteem and  
Attractiveness Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Body Cathexis					
2. Self Cathexis	.61***				
3. Self Esteem	.20**	-.06			
4. Self-Rating	.37***	.19**	.16*		
5. Other Rating	.41***	.15*	.15**	.55***	
6. Judge Rating	-.02	.15*	.04	.03	.08

Note. Self-Rating = Self-evaluation of attractiveness; Other Rating = subjects' prediction of others' ratings of their attractiveness; Judge Rating = judges' ratings of subject attractiveness

\* $p < .05$       \*\* $p < .01$       \*\*\* $p < .0001$

A t-test indicated a significant difference between males ( $M = 3.5134$ ,  $SD = .496$ ) and females ( $M = 3.3351$ ,  $SD = .486$ ) in body satisfaction,  $t(213) = 2.62$ ,  $p < .01$ .

Hypothesis 29. There will be a significant difference in body satisfaction between age groups.

Table 6 presents a frequency distribution of subjects' ages. A 2x3 Analysis of Variance was performed. The independent variables were sex (male and female) and age category (1 = age < 20, 2 = 19 < age < 27, and 3 = age > 26). The mean for males was 159.84 and the mean for females was 152.08. In order, means for age categories 1 through 3 were 150.46, 158.02, and 156.17. The analysis of variance revealed a significant difference between males and females in body satisfaction,  $F(1, 206) = 6.591$ ,  $p < .01$ .

This lends further support to hypothesis 28 which stated there would be a significant difference between the sexes in body satisfaction. However, Analysis of Variance failed to reveal a significant difference between age groups.

Additionally, a one-way Analysis of Variance (BC by Age Category) was performed and no significant difference was found. A Tukey HSD follow-up revealed the largest difference was between category 1 (age < 19) and category 3 (age > 26); however, no two groups were significantly different at the .05 level. The hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 30. There will be a significant difference between males

Table 6

Frequency Distribution of Age

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
17 - 21	97	45.1	45.1
22 - 26	45	20.9	66.0
27 - 31	19	8.8	74.8
32 - 36	15	7.0	81.8
37 - 41	6	2.8	84.6
42 - 46	6	2.8	87.4
47 - 51	2	.9	88.3
52 - 56	8	3.7	92.0
57 - 61	6	2.8	94.8
62 - 66	4	1.9	96.7
67 - 71	3	1.4	98.1
72 - 76	1	.5	98.6
77 - 81	2	.9	99.5
not reported	1	.5	100.0
Total	<u>N</u> = 215	100.0	

Note. Value = age



and females in self cathexis.

A t-test indicated there was no significant difference between males and females. The hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 31. There will be no significant age difference in self satisfaction (self cathexis).

A 2x3 Analysis of Variance (sex and age category) revealed no significant age and/or sex differences in self satisfaction. The hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 32. There will be a significant difference between males and females in accuracy of self perception of attractiveness.

A difference score was obtained for each subject by subtracting the judges' mean rating of that subject's attractiveness from the subject's self-rating of attractiveness. Means of the difference scores for males and females were computed and then a t-test was performed. No significant difference was found between males and females in accuracy of self-perception of attractiveness. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 33. There will be a significant difference between males and females in estimating what the opposite sex finds attractive.

Part B (Figure Drawings) of the Inventory asked subjects to

identify the body type of their own sex which they believed was most attractive to the opposite sex. In addition, subjects were asked to identify the figure of the opposite sex which they found most attractive. Means were calculated for the males' and females' responses to these two items (see Table 7) and t-tests were performed. As one can see from examination of Table 7, no significant difference was found between the male body type men predicted would be the most attractive to females and the male body type that females actually chose as most attractive. Men accurately predicted what women would find attractive. As shown in Table 7, a significant difference was revealed between the female body type women predicted men would find the most attractive and the female body type men actually did choose,  $t(208) = 4.15$ ,  $p < .0001$ .

Hypothesis 34. There will be a significant difference between males and females in the relationship of "current" figure to "most attractive" figure.

A difference score was obtained for each subject by subtracting the subjects' choice of "most attractive" figure (1 to 9) from their choice of "current" figure (1 to 9). For women, the current figure was larger than the figure they thought was most attractive to men, (current - attractive:  $M = 1.1290$ ,  $SD = 1.161$ ). The mean for males was  $.1512$ ,  $SD = 1.183$ , thus illustrating that, for men, "current" and "most attractive" ratings are much closer to identical than for females. A t-test indicated a significant difference between males and females in the relationship of "current" to "most attractive" figure,  $t(208) = 5.95$ ,  $p < .0001$ . Results support the hypothesis.

Table 7

Estimation of Body Type Attractiveness to the Opposite Sex

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Probability
Male Body Type	86	4.1395	.689	1.78	211	.077
Female Opp Sex Type	127	3.9685	.689			
Male Opp Sex Type	86	3.4419	.545	4.15	208	.000***
Female Body Type	124	3.0726	.689			

Note. Male body type = male figure males predicted females would find most attractive. Female opp sex type = male figure females chose as most attractive. Male opp sex type = female figure men chose as most attractive. Female body type = female figure females predicted men would find most attractive.

\*\*\*p < .0001

Hypothesis 35. There will be a significant difference between "current" figure and "ideal" figure for female subjects.

Hypothesis 36. There will not be a significant difference between "current" figure and "ideal" figure for male subjects.

For women, the "current" figure ( $M = 4.1984$ ,  $SD = .102$ ) was larger than the "ideal" ( $M = 3.1825$ ,  $SD = .731$ ). A t-test indicated a significant difference between "current" and "ideal" figures for females,  $t(125) = 12.88$ ,  $p < .0001$ . The results support Hypothesis 35.

For men, mean "current" and "ideal" ratings were almost identical. The mean scores were  $4.2874$ ,  $SD = .888$  and  $4.2184$ ,  $SD = .637$  for "current" and "ideal" figures, respectively. A t-test indicated these ratings were not significantly different. Therefore, results support Hypothesis 36.

Hypothesis 37. There will be a significant relationship between self-perceived weight-related appearance and body cathexis.

A Point Biserial Correlation revealed a correlation of  $-.2019$ ,  $p < .001$ . The results support a significant inverse relationship between self-perceived weight-related appearance and body cathexis.

Hypothesis 38. There will be a significant difference in body satisfaction between overweight respondents and other respondents.

A Oneway Analysis of Variance (Body Cathexis x Category) was performed and revealed a significant difference in body satisfaction between members of the three weight categories (group 1 = underweight, group 2 = average, group 3 = overweight).  $F(2, 212) = 6,2753$ ,  $p < .005$ . A Tukey HSD post hoc examination revealed the only significant difference was between group 2 ( $M = 3.5019$ ,  $SD = .5006$ ) and group 3 ( $M = 3.2546$ ,  $SD = .4652$ ).

Additionally, a 2x2 Analysis of Variance was performed. The independent variables were sex (male and female) and weight category (category 1 = under and average weight respondents, category 2 = overweight respondents). The dependent measure was body cathexis. The mean score for category 1 was 159.52, and the mean score for category 2 was 147.47. The analysis of variance indicated a significant difference between overweight respondents and other respondents in body satisfaction,  $F(1, 209) = 10.485$ ,  $p < .005$ . The two-way interaction was not significant.

Hypothesis 39. There will be a significant difference between males and females with regard to perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance.

Hypothesis 40. There will be a significant difference between individuals who are underweight or overweight and average weight respondents in perceptual distortion of their weight-related appearance.

Subjects were asked to indicate their sex, age, height and

frame size on the information questionnaire. This information was utilized to establish whether or not each respondent's weight fell within the range of weights indicated as "desirable" by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company standards (1959) and the range of weights indicated as "optimal" by the American Medical Association (Dorth Coombs Insurance, Inc., 1977). The ranges in the tables were used as cutting points. If the respondent fell within the range, he or she was considered to be of normal weight. If the respondent fell 15% above or below the range, he or she was considered overweight or underweight, respectively. This classification was then used as the criterion for comparing the respondent's perception of their body as underweight, average weight, or overweight. Since the insurance standards were derived through sampling, it was believed reasonable to assume that, in general, the sample for this research study had standards for weight-related appearance which were consistent with them and that deviations from those standards could be attributed to perceptual causes.

As predicted, there was a significant difference between males and females with regard to perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance,  $\chi^2 (4, N = 211) = 30.058, p < .0001$ . As shown in Table 8, more males than females perceived themselves as belonging to a lower weight category than the one in which the optimal weight standards placed them. More females than males perceived themselves as members of heavier weight categories than was actuality according to the optimal weight standards. However, 60% of the males and 67% of the females accurately perceived their weight-related appearance. Hypothesis 39 was supported.



Table 8

Perceptual Distortion of Weight-Related Appearance

Value	Group					
	Males			Females		
	Frequency	Percent	Row	Frequency	Percent	Row
		Males	Percent		Females	Percent
-2.00	1	1.1	100.0			
-1.00	26	29.9	78.8	7	5.6	21.2
.00	52	59.8	38.5	83	66.9	61.5
1.00	8	9.2	20.5	31	25.0	79.5
2.00				3	2.4	100.0
<u>N</u> = 87			<u>N</u> - 124			

Note. Value = difference score between the subject's self-perceived weight category and the subject's actual weight category provided by the insurance standards (self-perceived category - actual category).

A Chi-square was performed and a significant difference was revealed between individuals who are underweight or overweight and average weight respondents in perceptual distortion of their weight-related appearance,  $\chi^2$  (4,  $N = 211$ ) = 84.180,  $p < .0001$ . A Cramer's V of .44663 and a Contingency Coefficient of .53402 were obtained. Table 9 presents the cross-tabulation of self-perceived weight category by actual weight category. Examination of Table 9 reveals there was a tendency for underweight respondents to perceive themselves as belonging to a heavier weight category than was actually the case, while about one-third of the overweight respondents perceived themselves as thinner than actuality. The majority of average weight respondents accurately perceived their weight-related appearance. Hypothesis 40 was supported.

Table 9

Cross-tabulation of Self-Perceived Weight Category by Actual Weight Category

	Count			
	Row Percent			
	Column Percent			
	Total Percent	1	2	3
Category				Row Total
Underweight	10	3	1	
	71.4	21.4	7.1	14
	25.6	3.7	1.1	6.6
	4.7	1.4	.5	
Average Weight	26	65	30	
	21.5	53.7	24.8	121
	66.7	80.2	33.0	57.3
	12.3	30.8	14.2	
Overweight	3	13	60	
	3.9	17.1	78.9	76
	7.7	16.0	65.9	36.0
	1.4	6.2	28.4	
Column Total	39	81	91	211
	18.5	38.4	43.1	100.0

Note. Category = Self-perceived weight category, Actual = actual weight category according to the Insurance Standards.

## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

Summary

This study investigated the relations between self concept, body image, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self perception. The instrumentation utilized included the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the Self-Perception Inventory, and Body Cathexis and Self Cathexis Scales. This study was designed to extend the findings of previous research on body image and self concept as well as to determine the generalizability of previous research results. Further, this study was designed to obtain a more differentiated understanding of the relations among body image, self concept, importance of physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception. Finally, this investigation examined sex and age differences as they relate to the variables studied.

Self concept is the sum total of the view which an individual has of himself or herself. It is a unique factor in human experience and a powerful influence on human behavior. The concept of self is an abstract idea generalized from particular instances. It is determined by the interaction of the individual with other persons considered important to the individual, and especially by the ways the individual views the actions taken by those others toward him/her. Accordingly, the self concept is the system of perceptions which the individual formulates of the self in awareness of his/her distinctive existence. Therefore, since it is a construct which is inferred from behavior and which evolves from experience, there are specific influences which

forge the self from the raw material found at birth.

The concept of self is basically derived from the following sources: (1) the responses made toward the individual by the people in his/her immediate environment; (2) the individual's perceptions of their behavior relevant to the self; (3) the internalization of their perceptions into a coherent set of self views; (4) the resultant self which is perceived as reflecting back into the eyes of significant others; (5) the reinforcement of that self as seen by the individual and by others; (6) and by the individual's responses to the challenges and pressures which they encounter in the normal course of living.

An individual's physical appearance influences self concept. One's physical appearance has a powerful potential for eliciting specific social responses - positive or negative. The way a person feels about himself or herself depends, to some degree, on how he or she feels about his or her physical appearance. How the individual feels about that depends in large measure on how others around the person make him/her feel.

According to Hamachek (1971), an individual's appearance is an important determiner of self-esteem. In general, persons who are satisfied with their bodies and accept them are more likely to manifest higher self-esteem than persons who dislike their bodies.

Hamachek (1971) proposed one possible explanation for the relationship between self-acceptance and body-acceptance may be the fact

that the ideal self includes attitudes related to the appearance of the body, the "body ideal." If an individual's actual physical appearance conforms closely to the dimensions and appearance of his/her ideal body image, he or she is more likely to have higher self esteem. Usually, a person's ideal body image conforms more or less to the prevailing cultural standards of what a pleasant appearance is and what it is not.

According to Freedman (1986), because beauty is linked with femininity, the influence of body image on self concept and self esteem is greater for females than for males. Sanford and Donovan (1984) asserted that one reason so many women experience their bodies as a problem is that American culture teaches women that they must be pretty to be worthy, and sets up beauty standards that are unhealthy and unattainable.

### Discussion of Findings

Self concept is a dynamic circular force in human lives. The present findings of relationships among self concept, ideal self concept, and reflected self concept support the earlier work of Felker (1974). Every human is vitally influenced by those around him or her. The people who are important to an individual influence what he or she thinks of himself/herself. This research adds support to the assertion that self concept includes identities based on partnership, friendships, and other roles. An individual's self concept is directly related to, and may develop out of, the reflected appraisals of others. It appears that a person forms opinions of their abilities, emotional



states, and attractiveness largely from the feedback they get from others.

The present study found a high positive correlation between body cathexis and self cathexis. This supports the findings of Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973) who found a significant relationship between body cathexis and self cathexis. The current findings also support the work of Kurtz (1969, 1971) who found positive correlations between body concept and self concept. Secord and Jourard (1953) reported a moderate correlation between body cathexis and self cathexis, but they eliminated subjects whom they felt had operated under a response set. This was an arbitrary decision, but the authors report that its effect was a lowering of the correlation coefficients between the two scales.

It appears that how a person feels about their body image is associated with how they feel about themselves in other aspects of self concept. Body image is part of a larger self concept. The findings of this study are in agreement with the previous research findings of Berscheid, Walster and Bohrnstedt (1973), Rosen and Ross (1968), Secord and Jourard (1953), and Zion (1965). Attitudes about the body were found to be significantly related to self concept and self esteem.

The data support the previously established positive correlation between mean body cathexis and self-esteem (Mahoney & Finch, 1976; Secord & Jourard, 1953; Rosen & Ross, 1968; Berscheid, Walster, & Bohrnstedt, 1973; Lerner, Karabenick, & Stuart, 1973; & Mahoney, 1974).

The relationship between body cathexis and self esteem was confirmed for females; however, it was not confirmed for males. One possible explanation for the difference between males and females with regard to the relationship between body cathexis and self-esteem is the finding of a significant difference between the sexes in body cathexis. McMullen (1984) reported that research has shown that perceptions of one's appearance strongly influence personal self-esteem and social acceptability. The findings of this research seem to substantiate earlier findings that body image is more of a problem for women than men. Men tend to judge themselves in terms of what they can do, whereas women tend to equate self-worth with good looks. Obviously, body image is only one component of self-esteem; a person's assessment of his or her abilities and other attributes is equally important. One cannot determine cause and effect from these findings. A positive body image may increase a person's self-esteem; or, basic self-esteem may lead a person to feel good about his or her body.

The findings of a significant difference between males and females in body cathexis, the significant relationship between body cathexis and self-evaluation of attractiveness (especially for females), and the relationship between body cathexis and subject's predictions of how others would rate their attractiveness reflect the importance that appearance plays in the lives of men and women. In addition, the present findings reflect the differential significance of physical appearance in the lives of men and women. While past research suggests that good looks are an asset for both sexes (Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972), for women they seem to be

more than just a pleasant bonus. Greater awareness and concern over bodily appearance may be more acceptable in the female than in the male. This differentiation may stem from the fact that it is part of the female's role prescription to focus attention on the details of their bodies, whereas men are expected to be more subdued in the interest they take in the appearance of their bodies. A woman is more likely to equate herself with what she looks like, or what she thinks she looks like, or what she believes others think she looks like. Appearance is a major concern throughout the lives of women. The "physical attractiveness stereotype" that equates good looks with good traits is more potent when applied to women than to men (Freedman, 1986).

Respondents in this study were divided into three major age groups: 19 and younger, 20 to 26, and over 27. No significant differences were found between age groups in body cathexis. This is in agreement with the earlier findings of Bersheid, Walster, and Bohrnstedt (1973); however, the present results contradict the findings of Gray (1977).

One cannot conclude from these data that peoples' body image does or does not change as they age. The results are cross-sectional, not longitudinal. The similarity in body image among age groups may be a result of "cohort effects" - the effects of being born at a particular time. Another possible explanation for the current findings is the fact that the third age group contained such a broad age range (27 to 79) that the younger respondents' mean body cathexis ratings

may have skewed the results obtained for that age category. It would be worthwhile to divide the sample into four age groups and repeat this analysis. Nevertheless, the present results suggest that body image may be a stable phenomenon over the years.

The present study provides data about the existence of body image distortion. Almost half of the sample misperceived their weight-related appearance. The study also offers some evidence for the relationship between social characteristics and body image distortion. Normalcy of weight affected whether perception of weight-related appearance was accurate or not and affected the direction of the distortion. If perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance occurred, sex also affected the direction of the distortion.

Body satisfaction differed significantly between males and females as well as between overweight respondents and other respondents. This is counter to the earlier work of Gray (1977) who did not find sex differences in body satisfaction and perception. However, the current findings support the results of Hendry and Gillies (1978) who found significant differences in body cathexis scores among underweight, average, and overweight boys and girls.

The data presented support the assertion of previous researchers that a substantial amount of body image disturbance exists in the population at large with regard to perception of appearance, but do not support the presence of widespread disturbance of affect. The present study also supports Gray (1977) in her finding that overweight

individuals have more negative affect and tend to distort their weight-related appearance in the direction of normalcy. Further, the data presented provide support to the assertion that underweight individuals also tend to distort their weight-related appearance in the direction of normalcy. Therefore, the data concerning the relationship between normalcy of weight and ability to perceive one's body accurately contradict the findings of previous researchers that obese persons tend to exaggerate their weight-related appearance.

A cautionary note to this study, however, is that standards for weight-related appearance have changed historically and it is possible that what has been referred to in the present study as perceptual distortion may, in the case of those over-estimating their weight-related appearance, be more accurately referred to as perceptual innovation. As American society becomes more or less diet conscious, values concerning an attractive weight-related appearance will shift. As individuals mold their appearance in conformity with these values, statistical standards will also shift. Additional research is necessary in the future concerning the extent to which those who perceive themselves as heavier than they are according to one set of objective standards are forerunners of a new set of perceptual standards on a dimension which has few objective anchors.

The present study found no significant differences between males and females in accuracy of self-perception of physical attractiveness. This contradicts the earlier findings of Rand and Hall (1983) who concluded that men and women differ in their ability to judge their own

attractiveness as others see it. They found women were more accurate judges of their own physical attractiveness than were men.

Women in American society probably learn early to take stock of the strengths and weaknesses of their appearance and to take whatever steps are possible to bring their appearance up to established standards. The frequency with which women are urged to wear "flattering" makeup, hairstyles, colors, and clothes implies that they can and have assessed where their natural endowments, or previous habits along these lines, fall short.

One possible explanation for the present findings is that the photograph ratings were not valid as a measure of physical attractiveness. Another related explanation is that this study failed to control for the effects of subjects' clothing on judges' ratings of attractiveness.

A third possible explanation for the current findings is that as American society has begun to place more emphasis on physical attractiveness for males and set more standards for the "ideal" male appearance, men have developed greater awareness and gained more practice in judging their own physical attractiveness and thus are more accurate in their self-perception. Further, men are no longer restricted in what they can do to improve their attractiveness via hair and clothing. These factors could provide men with more reinforcement for accurate self-evaluation.



The results of this study support the research by Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973). They found that both males and females rate the importance of various body parts for both own and opposite-sex physical attractiveness in a markedly similar way. The mean own - and opposite-sex importance ratings for each of the 34 selected body characteristics were calculated for the total sample. The means were rank ordered. The ranking similarity found in this study clearly suggests that most of the selected body characteristics play a similar role in determining subjects' own physical attractiveness and the physical attractiveness of opposite-sex members. In order to analyze similarities and differences between males and females in ratings and rankings of body characteristics and to further generalize and extend previous research, it would be necessary to compute mean own - and opposite-sex ratings for the body characteristics separately for male and female subjects.

This study's data on current and ideal figures are consistent with the data in the literature for females; however, where this study found a congruence between male current and ideal, other studies have found that males consider themselves too thin (Dwyer, Feldman, Seltzer, & Mayer, 1969; Gray, 1977).

Results of this study support the findings of Fallon and Rozin (1985). The data indicate that current, ideal, and most attractive are almost identical for men, and that men distort women's preferences in such a direction as to bring them in line with their own current figure. In contrast, women perceive their current figures to

be heavier than their ideal or than what they believe men's preferences to be; their distortion of men's preferences is more in line with their ideal of a female figure. This probably accentuates the females' dissatisfaction with her current figure. The women's distortions agree with the Dwyer, Feldman, Seltzer, and Mayer (1969) results with high school seniors. They used ratings of femininity (not attractiveness) of silhouettes varying in weight and somatotype; females chose a thinner (more ectomorphic) figure than did males.

It is this researcher's opinion that the present data suggest that women are misinformed and exaggerate the magnitude of thinness that men desire. It is interesting to note that women's perceptions of what men find attractive do not agree with the reality that men report. Men do not perceive women the way women believe they are perceived. One could speculate that a possible explanation of why they do this is that women may focus on the preferences of their ideal male. They might believe that upper-class men prefer thinner women (as opposed to the more middle-class men's preferences generated by the present data). Therefore, they may be correctly estimating the figure preferences of upper-class men. Another possibility is that they are misinformed, possibly as a result of promotion of thinness in women through advertising by the diet industry.

The ideal figures of the women in this study are slightly below what they rate as most attractive to men. This suggests that factors other than attractiveness to men influence the pursuit of thinness. One possibility is the function of thinness and weight loss as a means

of establishing control over one's life. Another possibility is the belief that others (men and/or women) consider thinness in females as a very positive personal feature over and above its possible contribution to attractiveness (e.g., upper class women are thinner; Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980).

Physical attractiveness is a human trait, neither masculine nor feminine. The ultimate challenge is to shift the perception of beauty into neutral territory so that neither sex will bear the greater burden of it or receive the greater benefit from it.

#### Limitations of the Study

Subjects for this study were primarily undergraduate and graduate students from Kansas State University; therefore, generalization to the population at large should be done with caution. Although this study did utilize subjects ranging in age from 17 to 79, it would be desirable to include a larger number of subjects in the upper age range of 40 to 79 in order to more effectively study age differences in self concept, body image and accuracy of self-perception.

Another limitation of this study is the fact that cause and effect cannot be determined in correlational research. Further, it would have been more desirable to better control for extraneous variables such as clothing in the photographs of subjects. Finally, it would have been more desirable to weigh and measure the height and frame size of each subject rather than to rely on self-report in order to place subjects in the appropriate optimal weight category according to the Insurance

Standards.

### Implications for Future Research

Although this study did include men and women over the age of 50, the majority of subjects were in their 20's and early 30's. Considering this society's emphasis on youth as well as attractiveness, particularly for women, future research is necessary to investigate body image problems for older women, as well as other selected populations - lesbians, minorities, etc., who do not fit into what is considered to be the mainstream.

Freedman (1986) reported that research supports the assertion that the "double" standard of aging is linked with the emphasis on physical appearance. Attractiveness is judged to decline with age for both sexes, but faster for females. Future research might investigate the extent to which judges' ratings of attractiveness differ between age groups and the difference in attractiveness ratings between older males and older females. Longitudinal research on self concept and body image would allow the study of stability of body cathexis and self cathexis over the life span.

Women's dissatisfaction with their current figures and distortion of men's preference are probably related to the much higher incidence of dieting, anorexia, and bulimia in women. The extent to which these differences are specific to Western and/or industrialized cultures, and the developmental origins of these differences are topics for future research.

A component of eating disorders is body image disturbance. Given the prevalence of eating disorders today, particularly in women, research into the effect of therapeutic techniques to create body acceptance and perhaps ease the eating disorder would seem appropriate. In addition, future research might investigate therapeutic techniques and interventions for individuals experiencing body image problems in the absence of eating disorders. Not only is research necessary to investigate therapeutic techniques, but research is also necessary to study whether counselors who are accepting of their own bodies are more effective than counselors who have difficulty in this area.

Research has shown that self-esteem and body acceptance are significantly related. Future research might investigate whether therapy aimed at increasing self esteem is correlated with increased body acceptance. In addition, future studies might investigate the duration of improvement of body image and self image by incorporating follow-ups at various times, such as 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year.

#### Implications for Counseling Practices

The findings of this study indicate a relationship between body acceptance and self acceptance. Counselors often see clients with low self-esteem. Studies reveal that persons who seek psychological help frequently acknowledge that they suffer from feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness (Coopersmith, 1986). Counselors might question these individuals, particularly the women, as to how they feel about their body image.

Counselors need to be well-read and current on the research related to obesity, eating disorders, and dieting. It seems all too often counselors reinforce dieting instead of body acceptance. The most recent research is exploring the dangers of dieting and suggests the existence of a "biological set point." The set point theory is an explanation why 99% of all diets fail (Bruch, 1978).

"Looksism" is the standardization of one body image. It joins with sexism and racism to exclude those who are not in the dominant domain. A feminist analysis of the way in which "looksism" operates to oppress women might help women to be more accepting of their bodies and self images (Chernin, 1931; Chesler, 1972; Freedman, 1986; & Millman, 1980).

Counselors need to explore their own feelings and irrational beliefs about body image and change these beliefs to more rational beliefs fostering acceptance of individuals of all sizes. Counselors can act as agents of change. They can help their clients, and perhaps society in general, move toward greater body acceptance and self acceptance.

### Conclusion

One's concept of himself or herself is a very personal possession. How an individual views himself/herself is determined partially by how they perceive themselves as really being, partially through how they view themselves as ideally wanting to be, and partially through the expectations they perceive that others have for them.



The evidence suggests that how an individual feels about himself/herself is related to how he/she feels about his/her body. Body image is an important aspect of a person's self concept. A person's physical self is the outer shell which houses all of his or her inner feelings and, as such, it deserves to be recognized and understood for whatever its potential is for eliciting social responses which contribute to an individual's overall concept of himself or herself.

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*Continued*  
APPENDICES  
APPENDIX A

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE



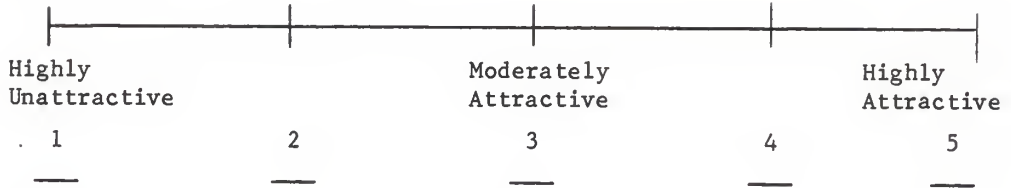
## APPENDIX A

### INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

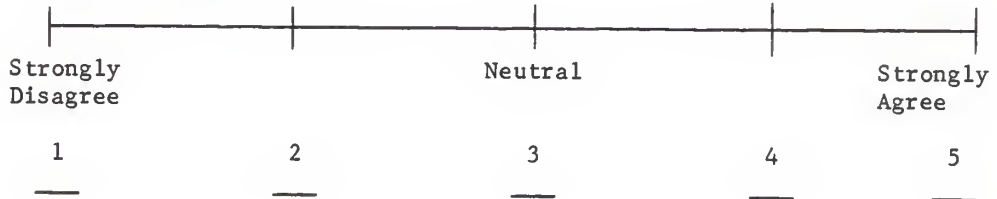
Answer each of the following items by placing an X in the appropriate blank. Mark only one answer per question. Some of the questions require a short written answer be placed in the appropriate blank. Read each question carefully and do not go back and change any answers. The session has been structured so as to provide you with sufficient time and privacy. Your particular response sheets cannot be identified by anyone; therefore, your name cannot be associated with any response. The investigator would appreciate your answers to all the questions.

1. sex: a) male \_\_\_\_\_  
b) female \_\_\_\_\_
2. age: \_\_\_\_\_ please report your age here.
3. height: \_\_\_\_\_ please report your height here.
4. Do you consider yourself: a) underweight \_\_\_\_\_  
b) average \_\_\_\_\_  
c) overweight \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please report your weight here \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you consider your body frame to be: a) small \_\_\_\_\_  
b) medium \_\_\_\_\_  
c) large \_\_\_\_\_

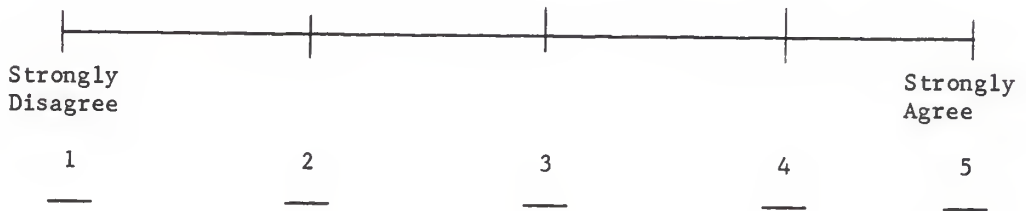
7. I would rate my body as:



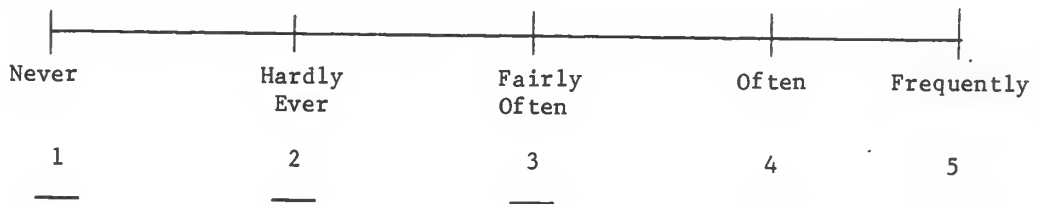
8. When I look in the mirror, I feel badly about all the food I've recently eaten.



9. I have often been self-conscious with people I am attracted to because of my bodily appearance.



10. How often do you dislike yourself?



11. How sure of yourself do you feel among strangers?

-----				
Extremely Uncertain				Extremely Certain
1	2	3	4	5
—	—	—	—	—

12. How often do you feel self-conscious?

-----				
Never	Hardly Ever	Fairly Often	Often	Frequently
1	2	3	4	5
—	—	—	—	—

13. Overall, how confident do you feel about your abilities?

-----				
Extremely Uncertain				Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5
—	—	—	—	—

14. Others would rate my body as:

-----				
Highly Unattractive				Highly Attractive
1	2	3	4	5
—	—	—	—	—

15. How many dieting attempts have you made in the past 12 months?

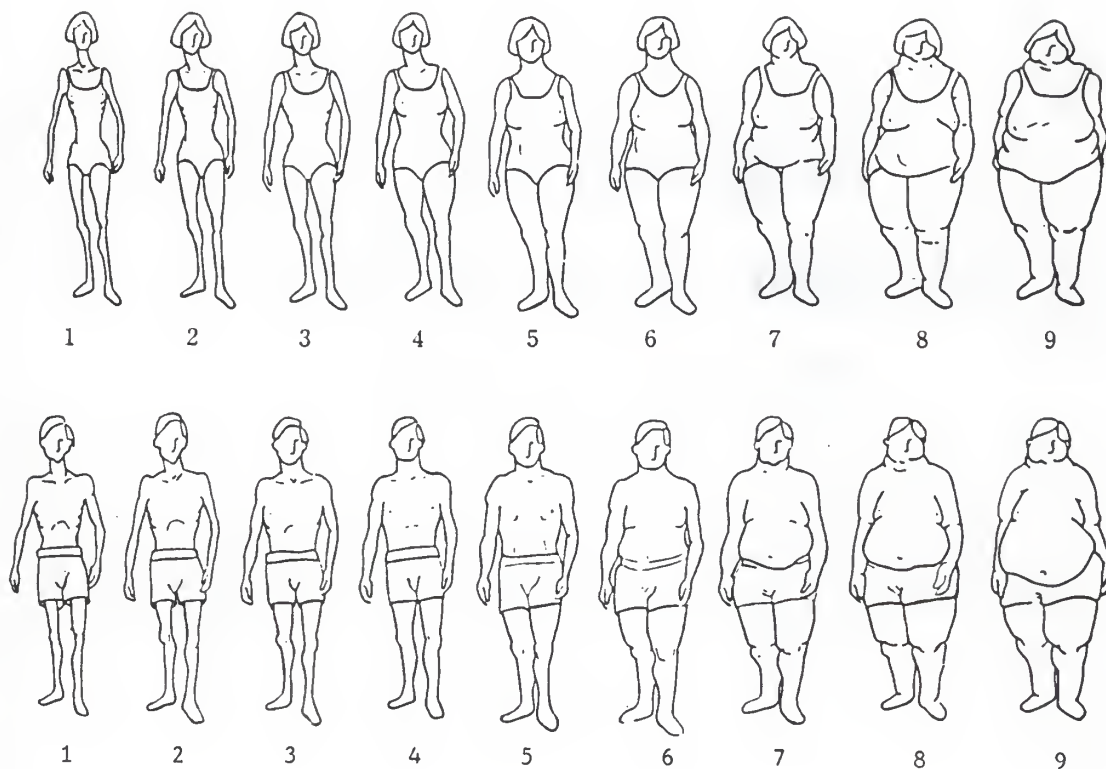
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### FIGURE DRAWINGS

## APPENDIX B

### FIGURE DRAWINGS



Answer each of the following items by placing the appropriate number in the blank. Choose only one number per question. Females should refer to the top row of nine female figure drawings and males should refer to the bottom row of male figure drawings. Look at the appropriate row of figure drawings above. Then, without thinking about it too much, pick the drawing that you think:

1. Is closest to what you look like \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is closest to how you want to look \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is the body type that is most attractive to the opposite sex \_\_\_\_\_

Now, look at the row of drawings for the opposite sex (e.g., females will look at the male drawings and males will look at the female drawings) and answer the following question by placing the appropriate number in the blank.

4. Indicate the figure of the opposite sex that you find the most attractive \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

SCALES A AND B

# APPENDIX C

## SCALES A AND B

### SCALE A

On the following pages are listed a number of body characteristics. Consider each item listed below and circle the number which best represents your feelings according to the following question:

How important is each characteristic in determining how physically attractive you are? Use the following scale:

Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
1	2	3	4	5

Circle only one number per item.

1. Hair	1	2	3	4	5
2. Facial Complexion	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hands	1	2	3	4	5
4. Distribution of hair over body	1	2	3	4	5
5. Nose	1	2	3	4	5
6. Fingers	1	2	3	4	5
7. Wrists	1	2	3	4	5
8. Waist	1	2	3	4	5
9. Back	1	2	3	4	5
10. Ears	1	2	3	4	5
11. Chin	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ankles	1	2	3	4	5
13. Neck	1	2	3	4	5
14. Shape of head	1	2	3	4	5
15. Body build	1	2	3	4	5
16. Profile	1	2	3	4	5
17. Height	1	2	3	4	5
18. Age	1	2	3	4	5



## SCALE A - continued

19. Width of shoulders	1	2	3	4	5
20. Arms	1	2	3	4	5
21. Chest	1	2	3	4	5
22. Eyes	1	2	3	4	5
23. Hips	1	2	3	4	5
24. Lips	1	2	3	4	5
25. Legs	1	2	3	4	5
26. Teeth	1	2	3	4	5
27. Forehead	1	2	3	4	5
28. Feet	1	2	3	4	5
29. Knees	1	2	3	4	5
30. Posture	1	2	3	4	5
31. Face	1	2	3	4	5
32. Weight	1	2	3	4	5
33. Back view of head	1	2	3	4	5
34. Trunk	1	2	3	4	5

## SCALE B

Consider each item below and circle the number which best represents your feelings concerning the following question:

How important is each body characteristic in determining the physical attractiveness of members of the opposite sex?

Use the following scale:

Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
1	2	3	4	5

Circle only one number per item.

1. Hair	1	2	3	4	5
2. Facial complexion	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hands	1	2	3	4	5
4. Distribution of hair over body	1	2	3	4	5

## Scale B - continued

5. Nose	1	2	3	4	5
6. Fingers	1	2	3	4	5
7. Wrists	1	2	3	4	5
8. Waist	1	2	3	4	5
9. Back	1	2	3	4	5
10. Ears	1	2	3	4	5
11. Chin	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ankles	1	2	3	4	5
13. Neck	1	2	3	4	5
14. Shape of Head	1	2	3	4	5
15. Body Build	1	2	3	4	5
16. Profile	1	2	3	4	5
17. Height	1	2	3	4	5
18. Age	1	2	3	4	5
19. Width of Shoulders	1	2	3	4	5
20. Arms	1	2	3	4	5
21. Chest	1	2	3	4	5
22. Eyes	1	2	3	4	5
23. Hips	1	2	3	4	5
24. Lips	1	2	3	4	5
25. Legs	1	2	3	4	5
26. Teeth	1	2	3	4	5
27. Forehead	1	2	3	4	5
28. Feet	1	2	3	4	5
29. Knees	1	2	3	4	5
30. Posture	1	2	3	4	5
31. Face	1	2	3	4	5
32. Weight	1	2	3	4	5
33. Back View of Head	1	2	3	4	5
34. Trunk	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER

Department of Administration and Foundations

College of Education

Kansas State University

This research project will be submitted to the Department of Administration and Foundations at Kansas State University in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Sciences Degree. It will be conducted by Michelle R. Jenkins on the various ways in which people view themselves, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception.

This study will contribute to the knowledge concerning self-perception, as well as to help provide a better understanding of the role of physical attractiveness in body image and self perception. Please take the approximate 20 to 30 minutes to complete the materials.

In order for you to participate in this research, it will be necessary for you to sign and date a consent form for voluntary participation. The consent form will be separated from the other parts of the study so that no information which you have given in those parts can be traced to you. I want to assure you that the information obtained in this study will be held in the most strict confidence, and that no information whatsoever regarding you personally will ever be released to anyone at any time. Once the data has been collected, all responses will be turned into numeric figures and the original questionnaires and response forms will be destroyed. I am the only person who will have access to your consent form.

In order to separate the consent form from the other parts of the study which you fill out, detach it from the other parts of the study in the packet, sign and date it, and place it in the brown envelope marked "consent forms," then return to your seat. If you are interested in knowing the overall results of the study, once it is finished, you may print your name and address on the green card in your packet of materials and return it to me by three weeks from the date of your session; or, you can place it in the envelope marked "results" as you leave the room, if you prefer. I will then send the results. You will receive a debriefing sheet as you leave your session.

While I appreciate your cooperation in this research, your participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you very much for your help.

PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE MATERIALS BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

Department of Administration and Foundations

College of Education

Kansas State University

This research project will be submitted to the Department of Administration and Foundations at Kansas State University in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Sciences Degree. It will be conducted by Michelle R. Jenkins on the various ways in which people view themselves, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception.

CONSENT FORM

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand the study in which I am going to participate involves completion of a short questionnaire concerning my body image beliefs. I will then view nine figure drawings and rate my current figure, ideal figure, and the most attractive figures. Next, I will complete a body satisfaction scale, self satisfaction scale, two body ratings scales and two self-concept inventories. Last, I agree to allow the experimenter to photograph me in order to have my anonymous photo rated on attractiveness. My name will not be associated with my photo. It will be coded in order to be paired with my corresponding answer sheets. The investigator and five other students from another university will rate my photo and the average of their ratings will be compared to my self-rating of attractiveness. I understand that my responses are totally confidential and that my name can not at any time be associated with my responses or with my photograph. I understand that this consent form will be separated from all other parts of the study so that no information in those parts of the study can be traced to me.

Further, I understand that I am able to withdraw from the study at any time, and all information given by me is anonymous. If I have any questions, now or in the future, I am free to ask them. All data will be reported as grouped data and confidentiality of my replies is guaranteed by the researcher. My signature on this form indicates that I have read and understand the information on this consent form.

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX F

INSTRUCTIONS



PLEASE READ THIS PAGE BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO COMPLETE THE MATERIALS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please be sure you have signed and dated the white consent form and placed it in the brown envelope marked "consent forms." Next, complete the questionnaire in the packet (Part A). You may use the pencil provided on the table to answer all the questions. Please mark firmly.

Continue to work through the remaining parts in your packet. Each part has a few sentences at the beginning that explain what you are to do. Please read the directions before you fill out the forms. Please answer all the questions.

Your photograph will be taken by the researcher at the conclusion of your session.

All information which you give will be kept strictly confidential.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE ROOM

Please be sure you have placed the consent form in the "consent forms" envelope and that you have completed all parts of the study.

The researcher will provide you with a debriefing sheet as you leave the room.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

APPENDIX G

DEBRIEFING SHEET

## DEBRIEFING SHEET

Psychologists have pointed to the individual's self-concept as perhaps the single most important factor in determining behavior. The self-concept operates to give individuals some internal consistency through a set of expectations and as interpreter of present and past experiences. Self-concept also is related positively to other desirable characteristics (i.e., academic achievement, level of aspirations, productivity, intelligence).

The importance American society attaches to physical appearance and attractiveness is revealed in art, literature, advertisements, and other mass media. Social acceptance, popularity, persuasive power, and success are all commonly thought to be influenced by an individual's physical attractiveness.

An individual's physical appearance influences self-concept. Recent research has demonstrated a relationship between physique type and self-concept. A positive correlation has been reported between body satisfaction and self-esteem. Body image disturbance is pervasive in American society, and especially common during the late adolescent, early adult years. A negative evaluation of one's body can have ramifications in various aspects of the total self-concept.

This study will investigate the relationships among self-concept, body image, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of individual's self-perception. This investigation will examine the relationship between self-concept and ideal self-concept, as well as the relationship between individual's self-evaluation of attractiveness and others' ratings of their attractiveness. I will be studying body satisfaction (body cathexis) as a whole and as related to specific body characteristics, as well as self cathexis. The relationship between body cathexis and self cathexis will be examined. In addition, this study will investigate the relationship of all of the above mentioned variables to self esteem. Lastly, this investigation will examine sex differences and age differences as they relate to the variables studied.

If you are interested in the results of this study, please fill out the green results request card and return it to Michelle Jenkins within three weeks from the date of your session. If you have questions concerning the study, please write them in the space provided on the card or contact Michelle Jenkins at Kansas State University, Department of Administration and Foundations. The results will be mailed to you as soon as they are available.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Michelle R. Jenkins

RELATIONS AMONG SELF-CONCEPT, BODY IMAGE, PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS  
AND ACCURACY OF SELF-PERCEPTION

by

MICHELLE RENEE JENKINS

B.A., Wichita State University, 1980

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

1987

RELATIONS AMONG SELF CONCEPT, BODY IMAGE, PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS  
and ACCURACY of SELF-PERCEPTION

Michelle R. Jenkins  
Kansas State University

This study investigated the relationships among self concept, body image, physical attractiveness, and accuracy of self-perception. The instrumentation utilized included the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the Self-Perception Inventory, and Body Cathexis and Self Cathexis Scales. Participants were 87 males and 128 females ranging in age from 17 to 79 years old.

The present study was designed to extend the findings of previous research on body image and self concept as well as to determine the generalizability of previous research results, and obtain a more differentiated understanding of the relations among the variables studied. Finally, this investigation examined sex and age differences as they relate to the variables studied. Data analysis included the computation of several Pearson Correlation Coefficients, Chi-squares, t-tests and Analyses of Variance.

Results revealed significant relationships among body cathexis, self cathexis, self concept, self-esteem, subjects' self-evaluations of attractiveness and subjects' predictions of others' ratings of their attractiveness. No significant differences between age groups in body cathexis or self cathexis were found. A significant relationship

between self-perceived weight related appearance and body cathexis was revealed. Significant differences between males and females and between overweight, average, and underweight respondents in body satisfaction and perceptual distortion of weight-related appearance were revealed.

Results indicated that (a) both males and females were accurate in assessing their own attractiveness; (b) subjects rated the importance of the body characteristics for both their own and opposite sex physical attractiveness in a markedly similar manner; (c) for men, the current, ideal, and most attractive figures were almost identical; (d) for women, the current figure was heavier than the most attractive and the ideal figures; and (e) men were accurate in estimating what women would find attractive, while women erred in estimating what men would find attractive. Overall, men's perceptions serve to keep them satisfied with their bodies, whereas women's perceptions place pressure on them to lose weight. The significance of this study and implications for future research and counseling practices were discussed.